

Village of Cayuga Heights Comprehensive Plan



Cayuga Heights, NY

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Village of Cayuga Heights Comprehensive Plan

Adopted January 13, 2014 by the
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Foreword

New York State strongly encourages all villages to adopt a comprehensive plan, and New York law requires that all village land use regulations must be in accordance with the village's comprehensive plan. Prior to the development of this document, the Village of Cayuga Heights' comprehensive plan consisted of the compilation of the Village's local laws, including its Zoning Ordinance, and the decisions of its Board of Trustees, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and various committees, and the documents generated in connection with those decisions. In 2010, the Village's Board of Trustees charged the Village's Planning Board with the task of developing a single document to serve as the Village's comprehensive plan. The magnitude of the work and the expertise of the Planning Board and its consultant that are evident in this Plan testify to the wisdom of that decision.

The Comprehensive Plan includes an inventory of the Village's assets, identifies current and future needs and pressures, and provides a framework for actions that will best serve residents in coming decades. Adopting the Plan does not change any Village law. The Plan's effects will only be felt as local laws are enacted and other actions are taken in the future. Zoning decisions are prominent among these actions. Re-zoning can only be done by the Board of Trustees. The Plan will guide their actions and those of the Planning Board. The decisions of these boards should conform to the long-range vision stated in the Plan.

Many residents have made it clear in their responses to the draft Comprehensive Plan that they like Cayuga Heights as it is. We are fortunate to live in a community that residents appreciate. The Board of Trustees recognizes its obligation to try to maintain those qualities that lead people to choose to live in the Village. However, one of the realities that the Planning Board has identified is that the Village has changed and will continue to change irrespective of residents' wishes. For example, population growth and commercial development in Lansing and the Town of Ithaca have increased traffic through the Village and reduced the variety of retail shops in Community Corners. Not having a plan or ignoring the Plan after its adoption will not, therefore, preserve the Village as it is.

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Maintaining what residents most value about the Village will require thoughtful and farsighted action.

Residents responded to the draft Plan with divergent opinions. Some endorsed the Plan's call for revitalizing the Community Corners area while others objected to the prospect of greater traffic and light pollution. Some residents believe sidewalks in the Village are inadequate; others oppose adding new ones. The purpose of the democratic process is to resolve differences such as these. As an elected governing body, the Board of Trustees will listen carefully to different opinions and the wishes of residents. It will undertake action related to the Plan with every effort to inform residents, engage them in the issues, and involve them in planning and implementation. It will seek and try to build consensus whenever possible.

Residents' engagement is essential to deliberating about and ultimately implementing the Comprehensive Plan. The Village relies on a small but dedicated paid staff and on the volunteer time of its trustees and committee members. Progress on the issues raised by the Plan will require additional contributions of time and talent from many Village residents.

Stephen Hamilton
Trustee, Village of Cayuga Heights

Preface

Prior to 2009, Village of Cayuga Heights planning responsibilities, such as the review of all site development plans, were addressed on an ad hoc basis by the Board of Trustees acting de facto as the Village's Planning Board. In September of that year, the Board of Trustees divested itself of responsibility for planning and created an independent Planning Board.

The Planning Board is made up of five voting members and one alternate with staggered terms of one to five years. All members are Village residents with varied backgrounds who serve in a volunteer capacity. Current members of the Board are: Fred Cowett, Sean Cunningham, Graham Gillespie, Martin Harms (chair), Deirdre Hay (alternate), and Roger Segelken. Henry Richardson served on the Board from inception through June 2013, Mark Morris from inception through August 2011, and Janet Shure from inception through August 2010. Trustee Stephen Hamilton is the Board of Trustees liaison to the Planning Board in succession to Trustees Beatrice Szekely and Diana Riesman. Deputy Village Clerk Angela Podufalski is Planning Board administrative assistant in succession to former Deputy Clerk Mary Jane Neff and former Village Clerk Norma Manning.

In addition to reviewing site plan applications with Village Engineer and Code Enforcement Officer Brent Cross and advising the Board of Trustees on land-use related matters in general, the new Planning Board was charged with creating a new Comprehensive Plan for the Village.

The process of developing the Comprehensive Plan has involved a wide range of interests, individuals and groups including Mayor Kate Supron, former Mayor Jim Gilmore, the Board of Trustees, the Zoning Board of Appeals, Village professional staff, Tompkins County Planning Department staff, and students from Cornell University's Department of City and Regional Planning. It has also involved significant input from Village residents, including a public forum held in the early stages at the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community and in the spring and summer of 2012. Substantial contributions by members of the public and vigorous debate, particularly about zoning, were a feature of these forums.

Key to the overall effort has been the work of consultant George Frantz, AICP, who has expertly guided the Board through the development and review process and is responsible for drafting the majority of the text.

The Plan contains four parts: Village Inventory, which catalogs the historic and current assets that make the Village a distinctive place and contribute to its identity; Plan Goals and

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Objectives, which defines issues important to the Village's future and provides a framework for addressing them; Plan Implementation Matrix, which prioritizes the achievement of goals and objectives and assigns roles to Village boards and departments for doing so; and Plan Implementation Details, which offers specific strategies for goal and objective achievement. These four parts are themselves subdivided into seven themes identified by the Planning Board as important to the Village: Quality of Life, Community Character, Ecology and Scenic Assets, Economy, Housing, Transportation, and Public Services and Utilities. Together, they comprise a document that will hopefully serve as a guide to the Village's future development and be of use to its residents and officials in the years ahead.

Martin Harms

Chair, Village of Cayuga Heights Planning Board

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Executive Summary

The overarching goal for the Planning Board in drafting this Comprehensive Plan has been to strike a proper balance between sustaining those factors that make today's Village a desirable place to live and addressing proactively the short and long term changes that will inevitably arise.

The Plan itself is organized around seven topics identified by the Planning Board as integral to the vitality of the current and future Village and the well-being of its residents: Quality of Life, Community Character, Ecology and Scenic Assets, Economy, Housing, Transportation, and Public Services and Utilities. Goals, objectives, and recommendations have been specified for each topic. These include but are not limited to the following:

Quality of Life

Maintain the Village's residential character while improving the quality of life for Village residents and supporting the Village's future economic viability:

- Review and update as needed zoning regulations while maintaining the Village's historic residential role,
- Integrate construction codes standards to promote environmental sustainability in site design and building construction practices,
- Ensure the continued provision of fire, police, and emergency services to protect the life and property of Village residents,
- Provide a wide variety of recreational and fitness opportunities for Village residents of all ages.

Community Character

Preserve the natural, architectural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources that make the Village a distinctive community:

- Establish mechanisms for documenting and preserving those aspects of the Village that contribute to its historic character,

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- Review and update as needed design standards addressing streetscapes, parking, lighting, landscaping, signage and other site design elements,
- Create distinctive entries to provide an attractive welcome to the Village.

Ecology and Scenic Assets

Protect the Village's naturalistic setting while increasing recreational opportunities for Village residents:

- Conserve undeveloped open space and environmentally sensitive areas,
- Safeguard water quality by minimizing stormwater runoff and preserving historic hydrological functions,
- Develop and implement a plan for the control and management of invasive plants,
- Manage wildlife species that threaten species diversity and long term landscape ecology.

Economy

Maintain and enhance the Village's economic vitality while giving particular attention to its retail and commercial center:

- Establish an advisory committee to facilitate communication and encourage collaboration between Village officials and commercial property and business owners,
- Update as needed Village zoning regulations to permit appropriate small-scale home-based businesses while maintaining the Village's residential character,
- Develop and implement a plan in collaboration with property owners, businesses, and residents for redevelopment of the Community Corners area as a dynamic mixed-use commercial and cultural center for the Village, and a continued defining element for the community,
- Identify and exploit opportunities to collaborate with the Town of Ithaca and other municipalities to provide shared services that are cost effective and beneficial to the Village.

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Housing

Make available a variety of high-quality housing options to Village residents while protecting community character and the existing quality of life:

- Replace the existing zoning ordinance and the August 2010 amendment with a new ordinance that better protects residential family neighborhoods,
- Ensure that zoning allows for a range of housing options in the existing commercial zoning district or a new mixed-used zoning district,
- Incorporate into site plan review and subdivision standards relevant criteria to promote environmental sustainability such as those proposed by the International Green Construction Code (IGCC) and LEED-ND (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design - Neighborhood Development).

Transportation

Continue to provide a transportation system that meets the needs of Village residents and non-residents while encouraging the use of public transit and creating a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment:

- Maintain an effective and efficient street network without compromising Village character and walkability by ensuring any new development addresses impacts to the street network and traffic flow,
- Develop and implement a strategic plan for sidewalks identifying and addressing gaps in the existing sidewalk network and ensuring the safety of Village pedestrians, especially residents of the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community and children walking to Cayuga Heights Elementary School, Boynton Middle School and Ithaca High School,
- Facilitate safe bicycle travel on Village streets by creating bicycle lanes where feasible on arterial Village streets and where not feasible by installing signage and pavement markings alerting motorists to the presence of bicycle traffic,
- Reduce conflicts between TCAT and Village residents by establishing a formal channel for communication with TCAT that provides for consultation with the Village prior to proposed service changes.

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Public Services and Utilities

Maintain and upgrade as necessary Village services and infrastructure while also improving energy efficiency and reducing greenhouse gas emissions:

- Ensure existing public infrastructure is maintained and upgraded as needed by establishing and updating plans for all utility systems that include base plan mapping, capacity benchmarks, and obsolescence replacement,
- Seek opportunities to partner with adjacent municipalities and institutions for funding contiguous infrastructure projects,
- Maintain the opportunity for high quality, close to home elementary school education for Village families by establishing an ongoing dialogue with the Ithaca City School District (ICSD) to assess the needs of Cayuga Heights Elementary School (CHES),
- Develop a program for energy efficiency monitoring of Village-owned buildings and vehicles and reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Village operations.

Goals, objectives, and recommendations are followed by proposed implementation strategies. For example, a task force comprised of Village officials and residents should be created to review and update Village zoning regulations; a Landmarks Preservation Committee should be established and charged with developing criteria for identifying historic structures and landscape elements, and creating a framework for their preservation; a survey of small-scale home-based businesses in the Village should be conducted to identify ways in which the Village can assist their viability; and proposed improvements to arterial streets should be coupled with traffic calming measures to lower vehicle speeds and increase pedestrian safety.

Considered in their entirety, the goals, objectives, recommendations, and implementation strategies contained in the Comprehensive Plan are intended to provide Village officials with a useful tool to assist with current management and future planning. It is hoped as well that the Comprehensive Plan will be read, discussed, and debated by Village residents. Pending changes made with resident input and by Village officials, a final

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draft of the Comprehensive Plan adopted by the Village will embody a shared community vision for the Village's future that can be reviewed on a periodic basis and amended as required.

Part 1. Village Inventory

Village Character

The character of any village is expressed through a combination of physical qualities and social infrastructure. Physical qualities are expressed in the geographical setting and built environment of buildings, streets, and landscapes. The social infrastructure refers to the village population and its activities. This combination imparts a community identity. The inventory that follows provides information that defines the community of the Village of Cayuga Heights, drawing upon its historical development. Print sources have been used as well as personal interviews. Gathering such data has been a critical step toward compiling this document.

Key Historical Developments

Jared Newman and Charles Blood founded the Village of Cayuga Heights by buying a large tract of farmland north of Cornell University overlooking Cayuga Lake early in the twentieth century. They envisioned a residential community for Cornell faculty families and purchased several parcels of land, totaling roughly 1,000 acres. The first purchase of some 650 acres was made in 1901 from Franklin Cornell, a son of the University's founder, Ezra Cornell. Despite great personal and financial challenges, Newman and Blood succeeded in laying out the Village streets and developing its first neighborhoods between 1900 and the 1930s. At the time of its incorporation in 1915, Cayuga Heights encompassed .44 square miles. In 1954, through the annexation of scattered residential development to the north, it grew to its present size of 1.82 square miles. For many years thereafter, the original Village precinct was commonly referred to as the "old" Village and the newly annexed area, extending from Upland Road to the Village of Lansing, as the "new."

Cayuga Heights represented a new trend in community development in the early 20th century. It was a departure from the historic concept of a village centered on one or

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more industries; the rolling topography and lack of substantial water sources, and lack of railroad access in fact were significant deterrents to industrial development. Instead, Cayuga Heights was designed as a residential neighborhood to serve the thriving industries and businesses of Ithaca to the south and a growing Cornell University. Throughout its history the Village has not experienced any demand or economic need for industrial development. It has instead filled an important role within the regional economy by providing high quality housing close to the city and places of employment.

The introduction of the electric trolley car before World War I and the building of the Village's own wastewater treatment plant in the 1950s were major catalysts to its physical growth as well as the establishment of its political autonomy. In the 1970s, the treatment plant's capacity was increased from 1 million to 2 million gallons per day in order to meet increased demand. An independent municipality within the Town of Ithaca and Tompkins County, the Village has chosen to maintain its own infrastructure of sewer and other public services such as road maintenance, snow plowing, and fire and police departments. The decision was made not to join the City of Ithaca at the time of its 1954 extension and the question has not been raised since. Village policy has consistently illustrated a sense of independence coupled with fiscal frugality befitting its small size and population of less than 4,000. Adopting this document as the Village's Comprehensive Plan is intended to affirm the identity of Cayuga Heights and to position it for continuing growth and prosperity.

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Community Snapshot: Key Dates and Figures.

1901	Jared Newman and Charles Blood lay out first streets and lots, development of Village begins
Early 1900s	Ithaca Street Railway Co. extends trolley lines across Fall Creek and through Village, helping to boost its growth
1915	Village of Cayuga Heights incorporated as a municipality, with a population of 137
1924	First elementary school built on Upland Road
Early 1930s	Ithaca Street Railway goes out of business as the automobile becomes the norm for transportation
1947	Development of Community Corners as a retail service center for Village residents
1950	According to US Census, Village population is 1,131 persons
1952	1 million gallons per day wastewater treatment plant constructed; Village adopts zoning regulations
1954	Village expands from .44 sq. mil to 1.82 sq. mi. by annexing Town of Ithaca areas north to Town of Lansing border
1950-1970	Increased demands on wastewater treatment system due to growth trigger doubling of wastewater treatment plant capacity to 2 million gallons per day
1969	First Congregational Church relocates from downtown Ithaca to Highland Road
1970	According to US Census, Village population is 3,130 persons
1975	Village joins other municipalities to create Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission
1980	According to US Census, Village population is 3,170 persons
1980	Cayuga Heights Elementary School is closed due to low enrollment. Community organizes to support reopening the school in 1988 with enrollment recovery
1990	According to US Census, Village population is 3,457 persons
1995	The Kendal Corporation develops the former Savage farm off North Triphammer Road as Kendal at Ithaca, a continuing care retirement community providing a mix of living arrangements, residential services, amenities, and comprehensive on-site health care for life
2000	According to US Census, Village population is 3,738 persons
2010	According to US Census, Village population is 3,729 persons

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Regional Context

The Village of Cayuga Heights is located in Tompkins County, NY and is one of five villages within the county. It is situated within the Town of Ithaca, one of nine towns in Tompkins County. The Village is bordered on its south by the City of Ithaca, the only city in Tompkins County. Immediately to the north of the Village of Cayuga is the Village of Lansing. On the east and west, Cayuga Heights is bordered by the Town of Ithaca.



Figure 1.1 Village of Cayuga Heights in its regional context.

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Physical Layout and Architectural Heritage

Perhaps the most notable characteristic found in Cayuga Heights is its organic layout of roads and lots, most pronounced in the area known as the Old Village. The result is largely due to Newman's collaboration with Harold A. Caparn, a landscape architect from New York City. Many of the mature white pines lining The Parkway were originally planted as part of Caparn's plan.

A second defining element is the Community Corners commercial district. Developed in the mid 1940s, the district has grown to encompass an area that brackets Hanshaw Road between North Triphammer Road on the west and Pleasant Grove Road on the east. The district extends along both sides of Upland Road approximately 700 feet southward from its intersection with Triphammer Road and Hanshaw Road. The Community Corners area today is comprised of the Corners Community and the Village Green shopping centers, a gas station/convenience store, plus a number of stand-alone office buildings along Hanshaw Road and Upland Road.

The original Corners Community Shopping Center building, a small but distinctive white building with a red gable roof reminiscent of a colonial era tavern, still stands. The building and the lawn area in front of it are considered to be a local landmark and defining element for the Village.

Historically, the Community Corners area provided for a wide variety of retail shopping opportunities, including for many years a small supermarket. Over the past two decades, however, many of the former retail shops and the supermarket have closed and much of the space has been re-occupied by professional offices and services.

The historic development of Cayuga Heights is notable for the lack of industrial development. While there may have been limited opportunity for industrial development, despite the rolling terrain and lack of water resources, its founders envisioned the Village as supporting the well established and vibrant industrial sector centered on Ithaca proper. Cayuga Heights would instead play a supporting role as a new residential neighborhood. Because the Village is essentially built out, there are no locations within its boundaries

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where industrial development could occur without significant adverse impacts on surrounding homes and on the Village street system.

Village founders Newman and Blood established guidelines for architectural styles and required their approval of house plans prior to construction. With few covenants or deed restrictions currently in place, the Village relies heavily on its zoning regulations to plan and guide new building projects in Cayuga Heights. Architecture styles in the Village vary greatly; many found in the Old Village reflect nationwide trends that were popular in suburban development during the first half of the twentieth century. As evident when driving through the older sections, some homes contribute to a distinct and quaint charm providing a unique sense of history. Some of the major architectural styles are Arts and Crafts and variations of Greek, Tudor and Colonial revival.

A small portion of the Village of Cayuga Heights is designated on the National Register of Historic Districts. It makes up approximately one-third of what is known as the Cornell Heights Historic District that reaches from the City of Ithaca into the Village on its southern edge near Cornell. The boundaries of the Cayuga Heights portion of the Cornell Heights Historic District are Kline Road from the southern boundary of the Village to



Figure 1.2 Cornell Heights Historic District showing Village and City sections.

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Highland Avenue, thence south along Highland to the southern edge of the First Congregational Church property, thence east to Triphammer Road, and south to the Village boundary.

The original Cornell Heights subdivision, including the small portion that protrudes into Cayuga Heights, is a relatively intact example of a turn of the century planned residential suburban development. Cornell Heights was planned by William Webster, a landscape architect from Rochester. The curvilinear street plan, use of topography, and naturalistic setting reflect the influence of noted landscape architect Frederick Law Olmsted.

Thirty-five structures are identified within the portion of the Cornell Heights Historic District that falls within the boundaries of Cayuga Heights.

As distinct from the National Register of Historic Districts, there are no individual building structures or sites in the Village of Cayuga Heights listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places. There are a number of structures in the Village that would be strong candidates for listing, meeting such criteria such as:

1. Structures at the property are 50 years old or older;
2. Structures at the property have retained their architectural integrity (i.e., they have not been extensively altered);
3. The properties are associated with events, activities, or developments that were important in the past, with the lives of people who were important in the past, or with significant architectural history, landscape history, or engineering achievements; or
4. The properties have the potential to yield information through archeological investigation about our past.

Individual properties can be eligible for registration on the State or National Register of Historic Places. Also, a collection of properties, not all of which may be significant individually, but collectively may have historical significance, can be included in a historic district.

Demographics

The Village of Cayuga Heights has had a stable population around 3,700 residents over the last ten years. According to the 2010 US Census, the population was 3,729 while in 2000 the population was 3,738. A 17.6% increase occurred between 1980 and 2000 (See Table 1.1). The Town of Ithaca’s population grew by 28% since 1980 while the Town of Lansing’s population grew by 32%. Cayuga Heights' smaller population increase can be attributed to the fact that the Village is relatively built-out, leaving little room for new development.

Table 1.1. Changes in Population in Village of Cayuga Heights - 1980-2010.

	1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 1980-2010
Population	3,170	3,457	9.1%	3,738	8.1%	3,729	0%	17.6%
Households	1,234	1,358	10.1%	1,497	10.2	1,541	2.9%	24.9%
Source: U.S. Census of Housing and Population								

The age profile of the Village has changed over the last several decades (See Table 1.2). The Village has seen an increase in children under the age of 14. Between 2000 and 2010, this group increased by 12.1%. The group under age 5 increased by 52.3% representing the presence of more young families in the Village. There was also an increase in the 15-19 year old age group of 170.9% due to a shift in the housing of Cornell students into an area that is within Village limits.

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Table 1.2. Population by Age Group in Village of Cayuga Heights - 1980-2010.

Age Group	1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010	% Change 1980-2010
Under 5	88	125	42.1%	86	-31.2	131	52.3%	48.9%
5 to 9	212	149	-29.7%	149	0.0%	157	5.4%	-25.9%
10-14	172	129	-25%	181	40.3%	177	-2.2%	2.9%
15-19	340	356	4.7%	199	-44.1%	539	170.9%	58.5%
20-24	585	676	15.6%	360	-46.8%	398	10.6	-32.0%
25-44	706	885	25.4%	785	-11.3%	814	3.7%	15.3%
45-54	397	311	-21.7%	465	49.5%	369	-20.7%	-8.1%
55-59	175	181	3.4%	171	-5.5%	204	19.3%	16.57
60-64	183	161	-12.0%	105	-37.3%	203	93.3%	10.9%
65-74	240	265	10.4%	310	17.0%	240	-28.6%	0%
75-84	135	162	20.0%	327	101.9%	267	-18.4%	97.8%
85 & Over	29	58	100.0%	148	155.2%	230	55.4%	693.1%

Source: U.S. Census of Housing and Population

The population between the ages of 25 to 64 has increased approximately 9% from 1461 to 1590 residents. Each age group has seen an increase except for the group from 45 to 54. This could be due to hiring and retirement patterns at local employers.

The presence of Kendal, a retirement and assisted living facility which opened in 1995, is associated with an increase in the population of residents 65 and over within the Village. Between 1980 and 2010, the number of Village residents 65 and older grew from 404 to 737, an 82% increase. The over 65 group now makes up 19.8% of the Village population.

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Household size in the Village is comparable to the Town of Ithaca and Tompkins County after accounting for the presence of Kendal and student housing. There are 1,541 households and the largest percentage of these (41.9%) is one person households. There are slightly fewer two and three person households than in the Town and County (See Table 1.3).

The 2010 Census showed 1,663 dwellings within the Village of which 1,541 were occupied with households. Owner-occupied residences were about 53% of total Village dwellings. At the time of the 2010 Census, 122 dwellings were vacant.

Table 1.3. Number of Households by Size in Village of Cayuga Heights - 2010.

Households	Village of Cayuga Heights	Percent of Total	Town of Ithaca	Percent of Total	Tompkins County	Percent of Total
Total Number	1,541	100%	6,988	100%	38,967	100%
1 Person	646	41.9%	2,589	37.1%	12,958	33.3%
2 Person	492	31.9%	2,298	32.9%	13,347	34.3%
3 or 4 Person	327	21.2%	1,781	25.5%	10,283	26.4%
5 or more Person	76	4.9%	320	4.6%	2,379	6.1%
Source: U.S. Census of Housing and Population						

Housing stock varies throughout the Village with more older, larger houses nearer the University and newer one-story houses more distant. In 2010, there were approximately 870 single-family detached homes and 101 two-family homes. The Kendal at Ithaca retirement community currently includes 212 independent living cottages and apartments.

Land Use

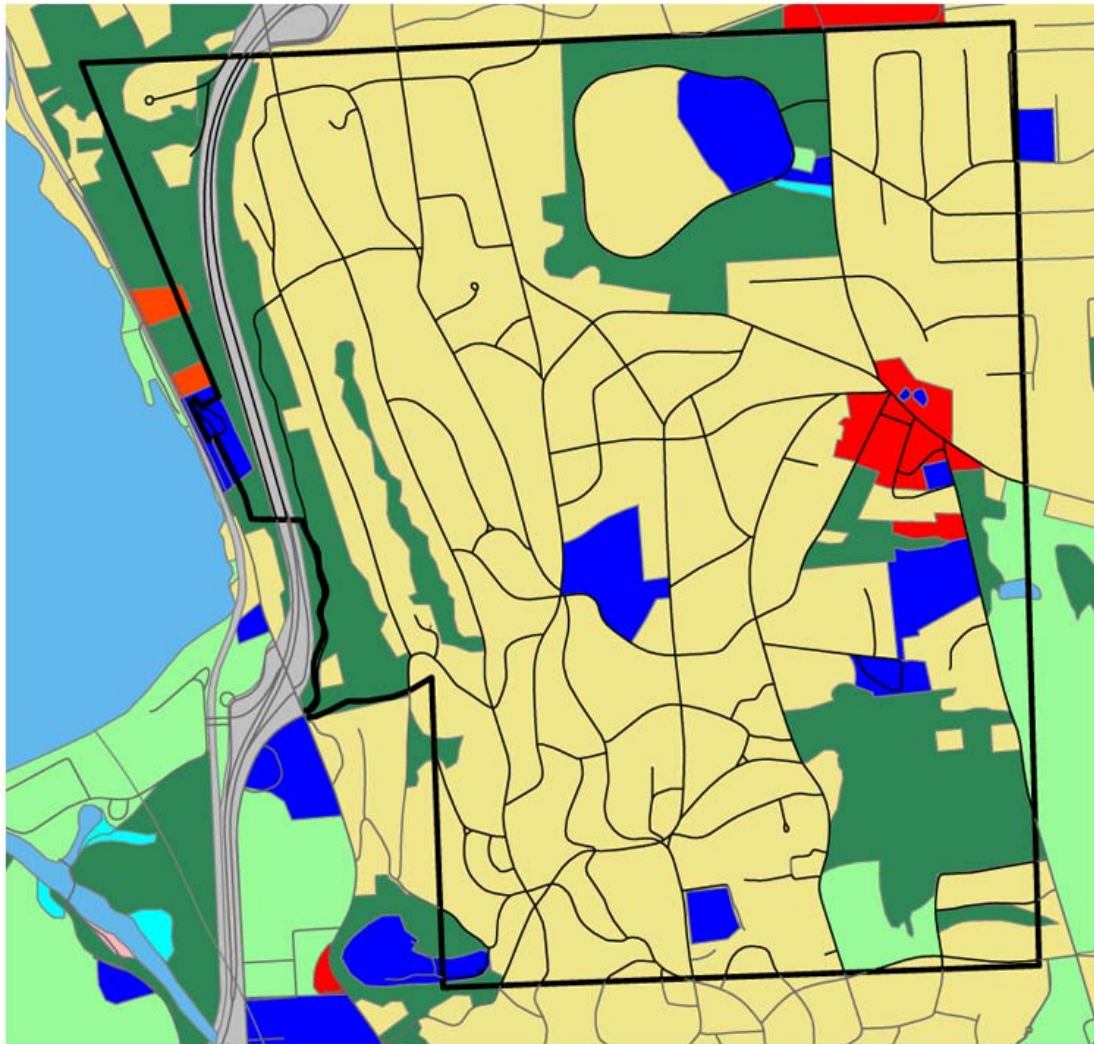
The Village of Cayuga Heights encompasses 1.82 square miles, or about 1,164 acres, consisting mostly of single-family residences. Almost three-quarters of the Village, or approximately 870 acres, are dedicated to residential land use (Map 1.1). This category is comprised of single-family dwellings, duplexes, and multiple-family housing, including apartment complexes, fraternities and sororities, Ecology House, Townhouse Community, and the Low-Rises at Cornell. Residential land use also includes approximately 60 percent of the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community comprised of attached independent living units.

Public and Institutional facilities take up about 28 acres. This includes the Village Department of Public Works on Sheldon Road, Cayuga Heights Elementary School, Pleasant Grove Cemetery, the Village wastewater treatment plant, Marcham Hall, Cayuga Heights Fire Department, and a portion of the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community that is taken up by health-related and assisted living units, as well as the Kendal at Ithaca multipurpose community center.










Another 25 acres of the Village is categorized Commercial in the area commonly referred to as Community Corners where Hanshaw Road runs between the Village Green and the Corners Community Shopping Center with an adjoining strip on the west side of Upland Road. The commercial district includes the Verizon facility located to the south of the Carriage House Apartments.


Almost 20 percent of the Village's area, or around 216 acres, is classed as vegetative cover. This refers to land that is covered with woodland, meadow or brush, either in vacant lots or in protected areas, such as Palmer Woods and the greenway that surrounds the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community. Many of these vacant lots are on the western slope of the Village along Remington Road.

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Map Key

-  Residential
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Institutional
-  Recreation
-  Transportation
-  Woodland, Brush, or Meadow
-  Wetland
-  Water

0  5000 ft

Map 1.1
Existing Land Use

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Recreational areas account for 27 acres, or about 2.3% of total Village area. The area listed as Recreational on Map 1.1 includes the Ithaca Country Club and Cornell's Jessup Fields. These are both private facilities and not available to all Village residents.

Route 13 is a limited access highway with a right-of-way through Cayuga Heights that takes up approximately 20 acres along the west side of the Village and separates the residences on Tyler Road from the rest of the Village in its northwest corner. The only access to Tyler Road is through the Village of Lansing to the north.

Remaining acreage – apart from residential, public or institutional, commercial, and vegetative land use – is taken up by the small amount of land covered by water and wetlands in the northern portion of the Village. Streams run down to Cayuga Lake in various locations.

While the large number of mature trees in the Village may give the impression that there is a great deal of undeveloped land, a closer look suggests otherwise. Development in Cayuga Heights is certainly not as dense as the City of Ithaca, but there are few sites suitable for subdivision. As a result, the Village can plan on only a limited amount of new construction, most of which will require tearing down and replacing older structures or redeveloping sites. Such a trend may not be in the best interest of Cayuga Heights; the Village character that residents list as a reason to live here would inevitably change.

Ecology and Open Space

Located on the Allegheny Plateau and Lake Ontario Plain, within the Finger Lakes region of New York, Cayuga Heights sits on a hilly area at the southeastern end of Cayuga Lake. The upland, or eastern, side of the Village, where nearly half of the community lives on a 0 – 6% slope, is approximately 900 feet above sea level. The western side, where another quarter of the population lives on 7 – 15% slopes, drops down just under 400 feet toward the Lake. Beautiful, steep, and deep gorges with 5 – 54% slopes contain dry and seasonal streams that run through Cayuga Heights.

Two streams are classified as active, although lacking in trout life and, therefore, not involving New York State Department of Environmental Conservation jurisdiction. They are Renwick Brook in the northern half of the Village and Pleasant Grove Brook in the southern half. Cayuga Heights and the surrounding region are located in the Seneca River Watershed and the Oswego River drainage basin. The Village is subdivided into portions of two smaller watersheds, the northern section in the East Cayuga Lakeshore South Watershed and the southern section in the Fall Creek Watershed. The boundary between the two watersheds is just south of Pleasant Grove Brook and runs approximately east-west, following the course of all natural water sources in the Village flowing down to Cayuga Lake below.

There are no wetlands within the Village that have been mapped by either the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation or the National Wetlands Inventory. There are, however, a number of areas that would likely qualify using current State and Federal criteria as indicated on Map 1.2.

The Tompkins County Environmental Management Council has classified as Unique Natural Areas (UNA) certain Village sites that possess outstanding environmental qualities and deserve special attention for preservation and protection. UNAs are chosen because characteristics make them extremely vulnerable to a wide range of direct and indirect impacts and site disturbances. UNAs have no legal status and include both public and private land that may not be open to the public. UNA inventory data may be utilized,

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however, on an advisory basis in planning and in efforts to identify and mitigate potential impacts. To be classified as a UNA a site must meet at least one of five of the following criteria:

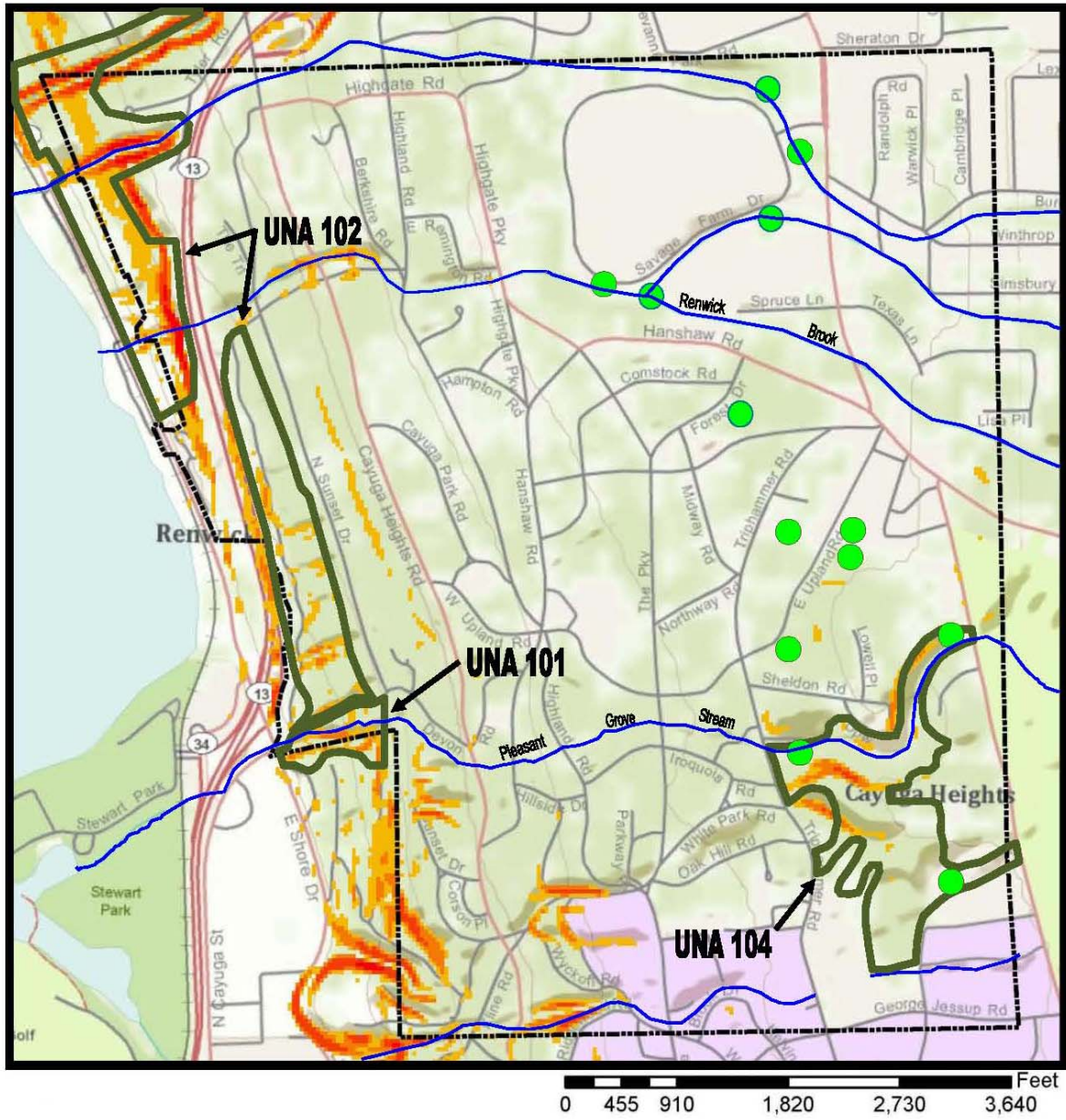
- is an important natural community;
- is a high quality example of a particular type of ecosystem;
- has rare or scarce plants or animals;
- has resources of geological importance;
- has aesthetic or cultural qualities.

Within Tompkins County there are 192 UNA sites, four of which are located within the Village of Cayuga Heights: UNA 101, the Newman Tract; UNA 102, Renwick Slope, which has two boundaries and counts as two sites; and UNA 104, Palmer Woods (Map 1.2).



Renwick Brook Just above North Sunset Drive

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Map Key

- Slope: 15%-19%
- Slope: 20% - 24%
- Slope: 25% - 34%
- Slope: 35% - 65%
- County Unique Natural Area
- Stream
- Potential Wetland Areas

Map 1.2
Ecological Resources

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UNA 101, the Newman Tract, is located in the southwest corner of the Village off Sunset Drive. It encompasses some 7.6 acres of land and was selected for its rare plant community, scenic and aesthetic value, and old growth forest. Newman Tract slopes are typically over 15% with elevation between 397 and 583 feet above sea level. The special land-use information in the UNA inventory notes that the Tompkins County Greenway Coalition has identified a biological corridor in the tract and a mature forest stand with trees over 150 years old.

The Newman Tract is valued by residents as an open space and recreational resource, and is a Cornell Plantations Natural Area. The ecological community contains mixed oak and chestnut oak forests, hemlock-northern hardwood forest and oak-beech-hickory-pine type forest areas, and a rocky headwater stream with shale cliff and talus slope woodland. Elm-leaved goldenrod (*Solidago ulmifolia*) and hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), rated as "locally rare," were found on the site. The UNA Inventory does not contain much specific data regarding animal species.

UNA 102, Renwick Slope, runs along the western edge of the Village and was selected for such ecological features as rare plants and plant communities, scenic/aesthetic value, and old-growth forest. The site has locally important views. Slopes exceed 30%, between 400 feet and 700 feet above sea level. The site encompasses some 74 acres in total, including areas lying in the Town of Ithaca and the Town and Village of Lansing. The special land-use information notes from the Tompkins County Greenway Coalition in its greenway plan document identified a biological corridor and a mature forest stand with trees over 150 years old, as is the case in the Newman Tract.

Water resources information for Renwick Slope notes a lake or pond. The ecological community consists of a rocky headwater and intermittent stream, forests of the beech-maple mesic and Appalachian oak-hickory types with successional red cedar woodland, and a shale cliff and talus community and woodland.

Forked chickweed (*Paronychia canadensis*), hackberry (*Celtis occidentalis*), heart-leaved alexanders (*Zizia aptera*), hoary mountain-mint (*Pycnanthemum incanum*), moss phlox (*Phlox subulata*), palmate violet (*Viola palmata*), and pitch pine (*Pinus rigida*) were

Village of Cayuga Heights Comprehensive Plan

found on the site and are rated as "locally rare." The UNA Inventory does not contain much specific data regarding animal species.

UNA 104, Palmer Woods, is in the southeastern corner of the Village, adjoining the Cornell campus. It was selected because of bird watching opportunities, the plant community, its urban green space with an old grown forest, and scenic value. Slopes in a number of places within the UNA exceed 30%. It covers almost 44 acres in area, including a small portion located in the Town of Ithaca.

The special land-use information notes a mature forest stand with more trees over 150 years old. The ecological community consists of mixed oak; hickory, white ash, and oak; and maple and basswood rich mesic forests, as well as successional hardwoods, a midreach stream, deep and emergent marsh, and sedge meadow. No rare or scarce plant species were located on the site. The UNA Inventory does not contain much specific data regarding animal species. Palmer Woods is also managed by Cornell Plantations as a Natural Area.

Parks and Recreation

Within Cayuga Heights there are a limited number of park and recreation facilities. Sunset Park off Cayuga Heights Road is important to both Village residents and visitors who enjoy its lawns and scenic overlook for passive recreation.

In addition, residents have access to public and private park and recreation facilities just beyond the Village boundaries. East of Cayuga Heights within the Town of Ithaca there are recreation parks in the Tareyton and Salem Drive neighborhood known as "Cigarette Heights" that are accessible by foot via paths from Community Corners to Texas Lane, from Texas Lane to Simsbury Drive, Lisa Lane to St. Catherine Circle, and finally to the Northeast Recreation Way bicycle and pedestrian path. Just north and east of Cayuga Heights there is a conveniently accessible community park on Uptown Road in the Village of Lansing.

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There are several privately owned and maintained but functionally semi-public recreation facilities in close proximity to the Village and easily accessible by its residents in the Village of Lansing, including the cooperative Ithaca Swim Club on Uptown Road that offers a seasonal outdoor pool and tennis courts and the YMCA off North Triphammer Road just past The Shops at Ithaca Mall that offers a full array of recreation for children and adults. Part of the present-day Pleasant Grove Road location of the Ithaca County Club, which was founded at a previous site within the Village near the First Congregational Church, lies within the Village. The Country Club offers a fine golf course, tennis courts, and social facilities that are often used by the greater community as well as its members.

Residents of Cayuga Heights also enjoy access to numerous recreational activities at Cornell University and Ithaca College, including Cornell's Robert Trent Jones Golf Course on Warren Road just outside the Village in the Town of Ithaca which has a clubhouse offering a restaurant and meeting facilities.

Villagers have access to the natural areas, Palmer Woods and the Newman Tract, described above and administered by Cornell Plantations. The Plantations Arboretum and its other gardens are open to the public and much enjoyed by residents. The recently completed Cornell Plantations Visitor Center within the Arboretum is a center of educational exhibits and visitor services.

The Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology on Sapsucker Road with its bird sanctuary and walk trails is only one and a half miles from the eastern edge of the Village.

Although school playgrounds and playing fields are not open to the public during school days or practice and games times, the grounds of the Cayuga Heights Elementary School (CHES) and the Northeast Elementary School on Winthrop Drive just outside the Village are very popular with parents and children. Ithaca High School and Boynton Middle School offer playing fields, a running track, tennis courts, and a swimming pool on their campuses just below the Village at the base of Kline and Wyckoff Roads. It should be noted that pedestrian access to Ithaca High School and Boynton Middle School is affected by the steep topography heading down and up the hilly and narrow Village streets, as well as by the lack of sidewalks. On Warren Road, east of the Village adjoining Northeast Elementary

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School, DeWitt Middle School offers athletic fields, baseball/softball fields, and an exercise trail.

The Town of Ithaca provides bike paths and pedestrian walkways east and northeast of Cayuga Heights, including The Northeast Trail, DeWitt Exercise Trail, and the Lisa Lane and Simsbury Drive Walkways described above. Additionally, a footpath from North Triphammer Road behind Warren Real Estate runs to Lisa Place. Cornell Plantations provides a network of wonderful walk and bikeways; most Village residents access them by car.

Transportation

The Village of Cayuga Heights owns and maintains 21 miles of roads; the few private roads in the Village are Strawberry Lane, Park Place, Pleasant Grove Lane, Jessup Road (owned by Cornell), and Country Club Road.

Most roads in Cayuga Heights primarily serve local residents and have relatively low traffic volume, but high traffic volume is found on roads used by drivers heading to and from Cornell, downtown Ithaca, the Lansings, and beyond. Commuter use in the Village is found on Hanshaw, Pleasant Grove, East Upland, North Triphammer, Triphammer, and Cayuga Heights Roads. Commuting traffic has grown proportionately with population growth and commercial development in the Town of Ithaca and the Village and Town of Lansing.

Cayuga Heights was envisioned as a residential community and lacks the history of industrial development common elsewhere in the region. Because of this, its street network was laid out to follow the contours of the land and to emulate country lanes. They are characteristically narrower than standard city or suburban streets and have numerous irregular curves as they follow the natural topography. As a result, most streets in the Village are not suitable for use by contemporary large trucks.

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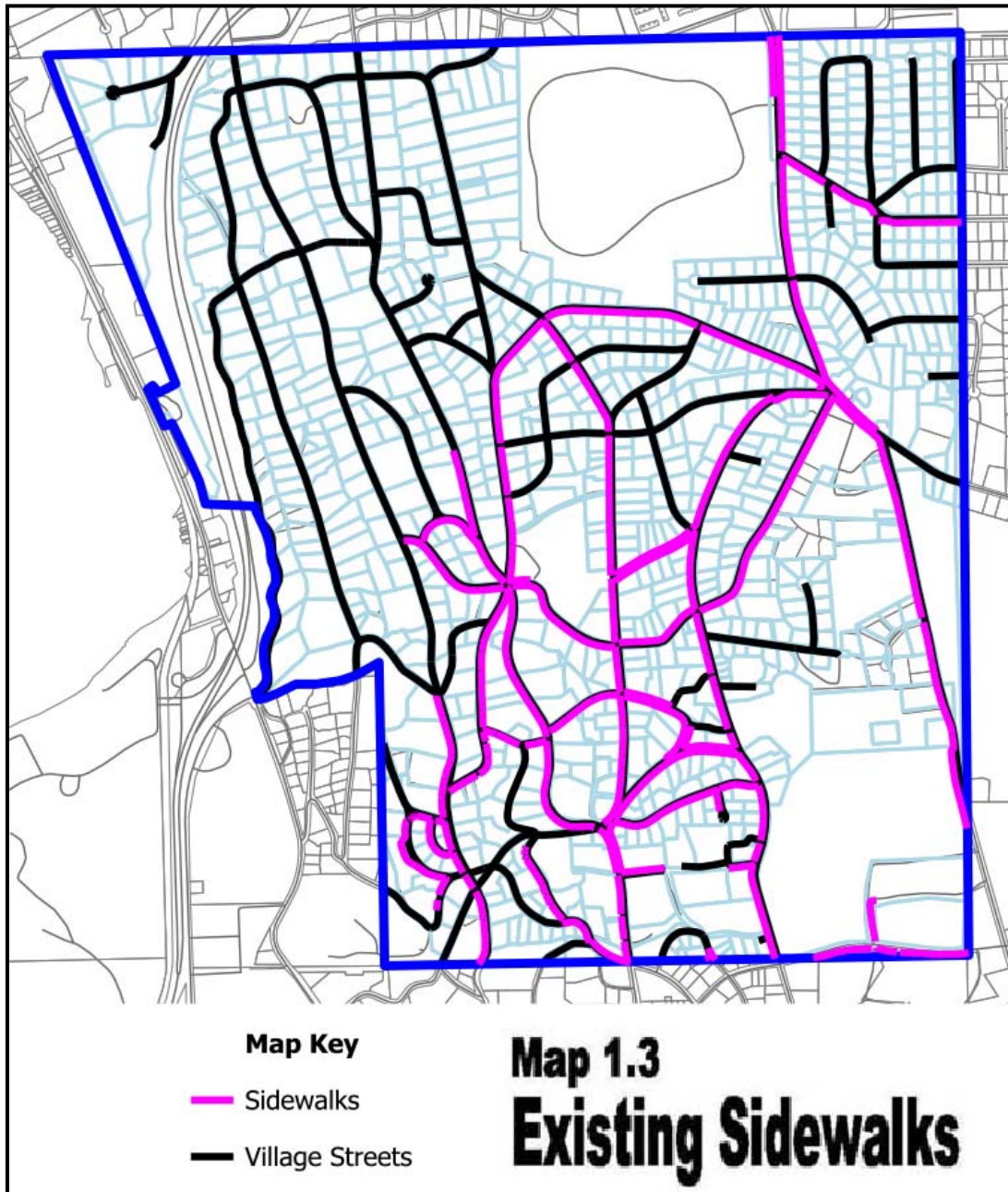
All roads within the Village are paved and the number of roads is not projected to increase. The Village of Cayuga Heights street paving program repaves one mile of roadway each year in the warm weather. Increased traffic on the commuting arteries impacts road maintenance.

Average daily traffic counts by the New York State Department of Transportation show 29,000 vehicles on Route 13 whose four-lane limited access highway segment within Cayuga Heights is its busiest roadway. Village access points to Route 13 are at Cayuga Heights Road and North Triphammer Road just north of the municipal boundary.

The sidewalk network in the Village is concentrated along roads in the older section of the Village (Map 1.3). Most sidewalks are located on a single side of a street and are repaired by the Cayuga Heights Department of Public Works. A sidewalk along Hanshaw Road from Community Corners heading east along Hanshaw Road to the Village boundary has been planned in coordination with a Tompkins County project for a larger segment of the street which when complete will connect the Village's sidewalk network with the pedestrian walkway along Warren Road in the Town of Ithaca. In partnership with Kendal at Ithaca, a pedestrian island and new crosswalk were installed at Kendal's North Triphammer Road entrance to enhance pedestrian safety there, both for Kendal retiree residents and the residents of a group home across the street. No further expansion of the Village's sidewalk network is planned at this time although there is ongoing interest in enhanced walkability within the Village.

Pedestrian access to the Ithaca High School and Boynton Middle School southwest of the Village within walking distance for the school populations has been identified as a safety issue because there are no sidewalks on the steep and narrow hilly streets on the popular student routes to the schools. These routes without sidewalks are located in the City and Town of Ithaca as well as the Village.

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Walkability for the school age population is a key concern also for parents of Cayuga Heights Elementary School (CHES) whose younger children walking to school are served by sidewalks on The Parkway and other streets, but not to the north of the school along a small section of The Parkway, all of Highgate Road, Highland Road, and other streets that lie within a half mile of the school and present reasonable sidewalk gradients.

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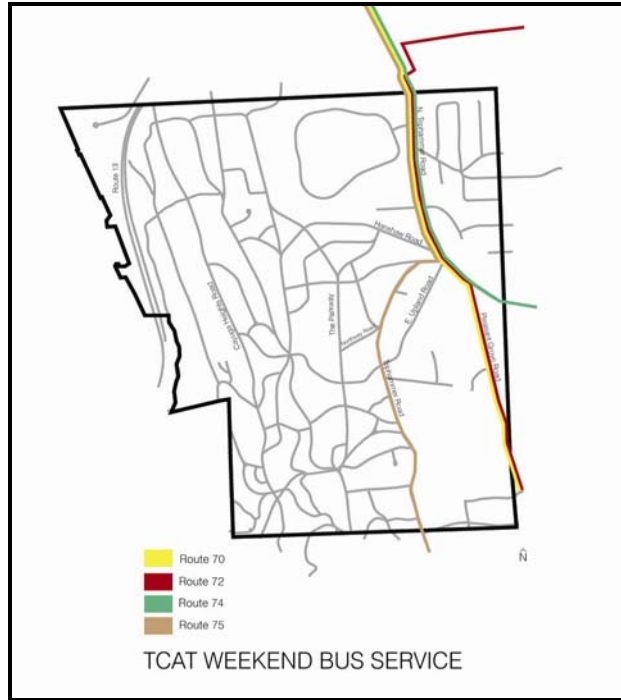
Public bus service in Cayuga Heights is provided by Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit (TCAT) with six TCAT Routes currently servicing the Village. Bus routes through the Village have become an issue of prime importance to some residents who perceive a lack of attention to their input. The Village has proposed that TCAT service be extended within the access roads to Kendal at Ithaca. Recently, the Village installed bus shelters at both the intersection of Hanshaw Road and North Triphammer Road and at Pleasant Grove Road adjacent to the Fire Department.

The newest TCAT route realignment in the Village involved diverting Route 30, TCAT's most heavily patronized service, from East Upland Road to Northway Road. TCAT has cited gradient and curve issues as the rationale for this change, which brings the bus directly past an entrance to Cayuga Heights Elementary School and has been a concern for many residents. In response, the Village reduced the speed limit at all approaches to Cayuga Heights Elementary School on Hanshaw Road, Upland Road, and The Parkway from 20 to 15 miles per hour and made the Northway-Parkway intersection a four-way stop.

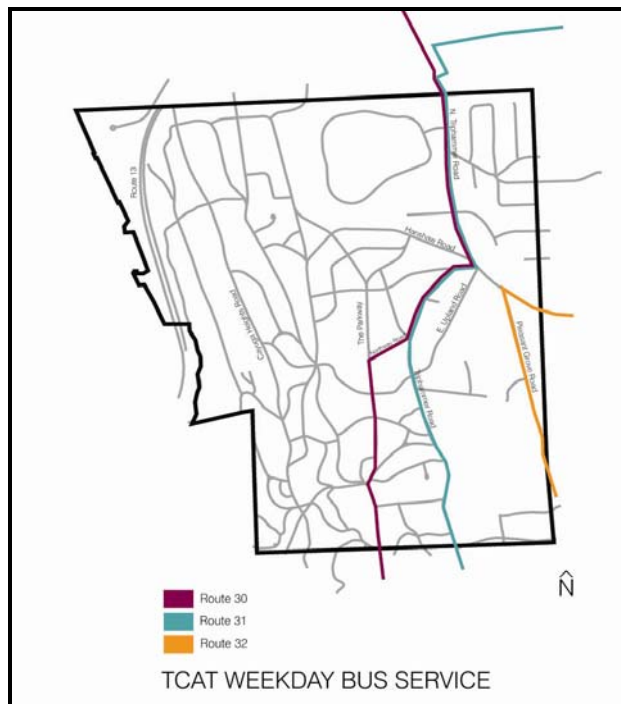
Commuting Patterns

According to the 2000 United States Census, 67% of Cayuga Heights residents used cars, trucks, or vans to go to work, 12% walked to work, and 10% used public transportation. In Tompkins County, 72% of residents used cars, trucks, and vans to go to work, 17% walked to work, and 5% used public transportation. Most residents of the Village and Tompkins County took less than 19 minutes to commute to work. The relatively large percentage of Village residents walking and taking public transit to work and the short commute time can be accounted for by the Village's proximity to Cornell University. In addition, the Village has a sizable student population bordering the Cornell University Campus. Incoming commuting traffic into the Village is concentrated in the Community Corners area. Outbound traffic is concentrated in three areas of the County: Cornell University, the research/business center at the Ithaca Tompkins Regional Airport, and Downtown Ithaca.

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Map 1.4a TCAT Weekend Bus Routes in the Village of Cayuga Heights



Map 1.4b TCAT Weekday Bus Routes in the Village of Cayuga Heights

Transportation Priorities

Current transportation priorities are to keep the existing infrastructure in good condition and to balance the transportation and safety needs of the Village population with those of neighboring communities. Another priority is improving transit service.

One improvement proposed entails adding designated turning lanes to reduce vehicle conflict points at the intersection of Triphammer, North Triphammer, Hanshaw, East Upland, and Pleasant Grove Roads in the Community Corners area. Under the proposed improvement, right-hand turning lanes would be instituted on northbound Pleasant Grove Road and southbound North Triphammer Road.

Traffic count information for major roads in the Village of Cayuga Heights is scarce and discontinuous. The Village does not routinely conduct traffic counts. Traffic count data is collected rotationally by New York State, Tompkins County and the Town of Ithaca. New York State traffic count data, however, are not uniform by the year collected, and up-to-date traffic volume data for local roads have been collected only for Hanshaw Road. According to NYS Department of Transportation data, Route 13 through the Village carries approximately 29,000 vehicles per day.

Public Services

Of prime importance to the Village is its municipal water and sewer infrastructure. The Cayuga Heights water supply comes from Cayuga Lake through the Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission, a.k.a. Bolton Point, a joint entity made up of five municipalities: the Towns of Dryden, Ithaca, and Lansing, and the Villages of Cayuga Heights and Lansing. The Bolton Point water supply facility, located at 1402 East Shore Drive, has the capacity to process nine million gallons of water per day (MGD). Recent daily production averaged 2.476 million gallons per day. The Village has two seats on the Commission, one of which is filled by the Mayor and the other by a Village resident appointed by the Board of Trustees.

The Village of Cayuga Heights owns a municipal wastewater treatment, or sewer, plant at 951 East Shore Drive with a permitted operating capacity of 5.0 MGD. Average dry and wet flows are 1.5 MGD and 2.0 MGD respectively. The plant services the entire Village of Cayuga Heights, most of the Village of Lansing, small portions of the Town of Lansing, the Northeast area of the Town of Ithaca, and a very small portion of the Town of Dryden. The Cayuga Heights plant is also tied into the Ithaca Area Waste Water Treatment Plant.

For the purpose of stormwater management, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) categorizes the Village of Cayuga Heights as a Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4). As required by EPA Phase II Stormwater Regulations, the Village has a local law for stormwater management covering six required elements: public education, public participation, illicit discharge detection/elimination, construction erosion control, post construction stormwater management, and municipal operations.

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Public Utilities

The New York State Electric and Gas Corporation (NYSEG) provides electricity and natural gas to the Village of Cayuga Heights. It owns the distribution system of pipes and wire and delivers services from multiple generation points.

A cell phone tower owned by Verizon is located within the Village south of the Community Corners area. The structure transmits cellular telecommunications and is about 100 feet tall. Although it is recognized as important to modern telecommunications, some residents are concerned about the tower's impact on the aesthetic quality of the community. New telecommunication towers are only allowed within the Commercial and Planned Development zoning districts. The Village Zoning Law regulates the location and construction of telecommunication towers. Building applications are reviewed by Village Zoning Officer, the Zoning Board of Appeals when necessary, and the Village Planning Board. Applications are subject to site plan review, a visual impact assessment, a local and intermunicipal public hearing, and other review processes. In addition, applications must comply with the Code of Federal Regulations and towers must be designed not to interfere with air navigation.

Public Safety

Police protection is provided for the Village of Cayuga Heights by its own Police Department located within the Village offices in Marcham Hall at 836 Hanshaw Road. The Police Department has a staff of 14 full- and part-time officers, dispatched through the Tompkins County 911 central dispatch system.

The Cayuga Heights Fire Department provides volunteer fire protection for residents and businesses, dispatched through the Tompkins County 911 central dispatch system. In addition to providing fire and rescue, 24-hour emergency medical assistance and light rescue service are rendered.

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The Department has an innovative, live-in “bunker” program that allows seven firefighters, who are often students from the local colleges, to live in a second floor dormitory at the station rent free in exchange for their duty shifts. This arrangement ensures the Department’s ability to maintain its excellent response time of three minutes, the fastest among all the volunteer fire departments in the surrounding townships. The Department recruits new members bi-annually and enjoys a stable membership, except when student members are out of town.

Education

Most Village of Cayuga Heights children in kindergarten through fifth grade attend the Cayuga Heights Elementary School (CHES), one of eight within the Ithaca City School District. Children who live east of North Triphammer Road attend the Northeast Elementary School, located in the Town of Ithaca. The present CHES school building, built in 1956 on the site of an earlier one, has been expanded several times. The school was closed between 1980 and 1988 as part of school district reorganization. During that period a Montessori school was operated there and a Cayuga Heights Community Association was formed to organize a wide array of community activities in the building. A group of district parents and teachers worked closely together on the 1988 school reopening.

CHES occupies 2.5 acres and has two community-built playgrounds, a soccer field, and a nature and fitness trail. There is a parent-run, not-for-profit after school program for children ages 5 to 12 that operates at the school. The school is an integral part of the community and frequently mentioned as a reason to move into the Village.

The Northeast Elementary School (NES) is located approximately 3/8 mile east of the Village on Winthrop Drive. The school campus occupies approximately 11 acres of land and includes playgrounds, basketball court, and sports field for soccer and other sports. NES also offers an after school program for children.

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Families are also served through the Community Nursery School, offering a toddler program and programs for children age 3 to 6, has been in existence since the 1940s and for decades has been located at the First Congregational Church on Highland Road.

After elementary school, within the Ithaca City School District, most young people from Cayuga Heights attend Boynton or DeWitt Middle School in the sixth through eighth grades and then go on to Ithaca High School. A limited number of Cayuga Heights students attend ICSD's Lehman Alternative Community School from grades six through twelve.

The Village is served by Tompkins County Public Library located in 101 East Green Street in the City of Ithaca, which is the Central Library for the Finger Lakes Library System. The library offers a circulating collection of 263,000 items including books, paperbacks, magazines, videos, DVDs, music CDs, and recorded books. An interlibrary loan service is available to help patrons borrow items that are not owned by the library. There are computers for public use. Wireless internet is also available in the library for people to use their own laptop.

Village residents who are affiliated with Cornell University or Ithaca College have access to the libraries of those two institutions. The Kendal at Ithaca retirement community also has a library primarily for its own residents. The collection includes books, journals, magazines, and CDs that are available for public use on site.

Government and Financial Structure

Government

The Village is governed by the Mayor and the six-person volunteer Board of Trustees. The Mayor oversees the Village staff, made up of the Clerk and Deputy Clerk, the Treasurer, the Superintendent and Assistant Superintendent of Public Works, ten Public Works Department employees, the Fire Chief, the Chief of Police and fourteen full- and part-time Police officers, and two Police Clerks. The Chief of the Fire Department directs all aspects of the volunteer Cayuga Heights Fire Department with elected junior officers.

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Additionally, the Village Justice and Court Clerk make up the Village's judiciary. A volunteer five person Zoning Board of Appeals and a volunteer five person Planning Board round out the Village governing structure. Additionally, numerous individuals, such as the Village Forester, serve the Village in a voluntary capacity and as members of various community boards and commissions involved with area youth programs, the environment, local television and wireless access, and more.

The Mayor represents the Village on the Tompkins County Council of Governments and serves as a Commissioner on the Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission. The Mayor also represents the Village on the Board of the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council. Current trustees represent the Village as municipal colleagues on such bodies as the Town of Ithaca Planning Board and the Greater Tompkins County Intermunicipal Health Consortium.

Mayoral and trustee positions are filled for two-year terms with Village elections held in March annually. Three of the six trustees are elected each year. Village staff and board and commission memberships are mayoral appointments approved by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees meets monthly to conduct the Village's business.

The Village website, overseen by the Clerk, serves as the main point of communications for the Village. All aspects of the Village government, including minutes of Board of Trustees meetings, may be referenced there.

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Budget

The Village budget, which operates on a June 1 – May 31 fiscal year, funds its public services. These services include maintaining public safety through police and fire protection and the Village court and maintaining the physical infrastructure through the public works water and sewer systems, solid waste pick-up and recycling, road maintenance, building and zoning code enforcement, and more. Budget expenditures and revenues for FY 2012 (2011-2012) are broken down in Tables 1.4 and 1.5.

The Village has a number of revenue sources that fund its operating expenses (Table 1.6). The primary source of its operating, or general fund, budget is property taxes at 65%, and sales taxes at 18%, plus various fees. Funding for the maintenance and operation of the Village water and sewer systems, including the Village-owned wastewater (sewer) plant, which is its greatest capital asset with a value of over \$2 million, comes from user fees and benefit assessments rather than taxes. The Village contracts with a private company, Yaws Environmental Process Controls, for the operation of the sewer plant. Villagers purchase water from the Southern Cayuga Lake Intermunicipal Water Commission (SCLIWC), a.k.a. Bolton Point, on whose commission the Mayor and one other Village resident sit as two of the ten commissioners that determine water rates and govern the operation.

Table 1.4. Village Expenditures - FY 2012

Fund	Amount
General Fund Expenses	\$3,583,050
Debt Service	\$244,450
Water Service	\$517,000
Sewer Service	\$927,000
Source: Village of Cayuga Heights Adopted Budget, April 27, 2011	

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Table 1.5. Village Revenues - FY 2012

Revenue Source	Amount
Property Tax	\$2,246,083
Sales Tax	\$630,000
Other Taxes, Fees, State & Federal Aid	\$591,417
Water Service Revenues	\$517,000
Sewer Fund Revenues	\$827,000
From Surpluses	\$460,000
Total Revenues	\$5,271,500
Source: Village of Cayuga Heights Adopted Budget, April 27, 2011	

Because Village property taxes are the largest source of general fund revenues, the value of taxable properties in the Village is critical. The total assessed value of taxable properties in Cayuga Heights in 2010 was approximately \$383,576,000. In addition to taxable properties, 88 properties are tax exempt with an approximate assessed value of \$37,785,000, or 9% of total assessed valuation.

The Village enjoys a relatively robust property tax base. Excluding the tax exempt properties within the Village, the amount of taxable property is just over \$101,000 per capita, which compares favorably with other villages in Tompkins County and the surrounding region¹ where the average is \$64,500 per person.

Although the property tax base for Cayuga Heights is comparatively large, the fact that the Village is essentially built out indicates that any growth in the property tax base will be largely limited to increased valuations of existing properties.

Sales tax revenues are collected by Tompkins County and distributed to Cayuga Heights based on the size of its population. Because the population of Cayuga Heights is

¹ Aurora, Cazenovia, Dryden, Freeville, Groton, Lansing, Moravia, Owego, Trumansburg

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expected to remain relatively stable while the population in the Town of Ithaca is growing, the Village's share of County sales tax revenues will likely decrease.

Zoning

Since 1953, the Village of Cayuga Heights has regulated land use through zoning law referring to the permissible height, number of stories and size of buildings and other structures; the percentage of occupancy of lots; and the density of population, in accordance with Article VII of NYS Village Law. Article IX of the Village of Cayuga Heights Laws establishes specific zoning districts and sets forth specific uses permitted in each district, as well as design and operating standards. The Village has amended and updated its zoning regulations on a number of occasions since their original adoption.

The Village is divided into four types of zoning districts (Map 1.5):

- Residence District
- Multiple Housing District
- Commercial District
- Planned Unit Development District

The Village of Cayuga Heights has not had any history of industrial development. Such land use was not anticipated in any early planning schemes for the Village for a number of reasons discussed earlier in this document. Given the essentially built out nature of the Village, no suitable opportunities for industrial development exist today.

Uses within each district are further broken down into land use activities permitted with the issuance of a building permit; land use activities permitted upon the granting of Special Approval from the Village Board of Trustees; and land use activities that are subject to Site Plan Approval by the Village Planning Board.

The largest zoning district in the Village is the Residence District which covers about 75% of the land area in the Village. Maximum building lot coverage in the Residence

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District, including accessory buildings, is 12%. The uses permitted in the Residence District are:

- residence for not more than two families with a total of not more than two other occupants residing in the residence; or a residence for not more than one family with a total of not more than three other occupants residing in the residence; or a residence in which there is no family and a total of not more than four occupants residing in the residence;
- public schools;
- home gardening;
- golf courses, except a driving range or a miniature golf course conducted on a commercial basis;
- accessory uses as are customarily incidental to the main use of the property, including: offices of a resident doctor, dentist, musician, engineer, teacher, lawyer, artist, architect, or member of other recognized profession, where such office is a part of the residence building; and
- customary home occupation, such as dressmaking, hairdressing, laundering, home cooking, or family day care home, conducted by one person only, resident in the dwelling;
- any municipal or public utility purpose upon approval by the Village Board;
- any cemetery purpose upon approval by the Village Board.

The next largest zoning district classification is the Multiple Housing District. This district covers approximately 138 acres, or about 12% of the land in the Village, and is located in the southern portion of the Village adjacent to the City of Ithaca border and the Cornell University campus. Maximum building lot coverage in the Multiple Housing District, including accessory buildings, is 12%. Permitted uses within the Multiple Housing District are:

- any use permitted in the Residence District;
- dwelling for three or more families;

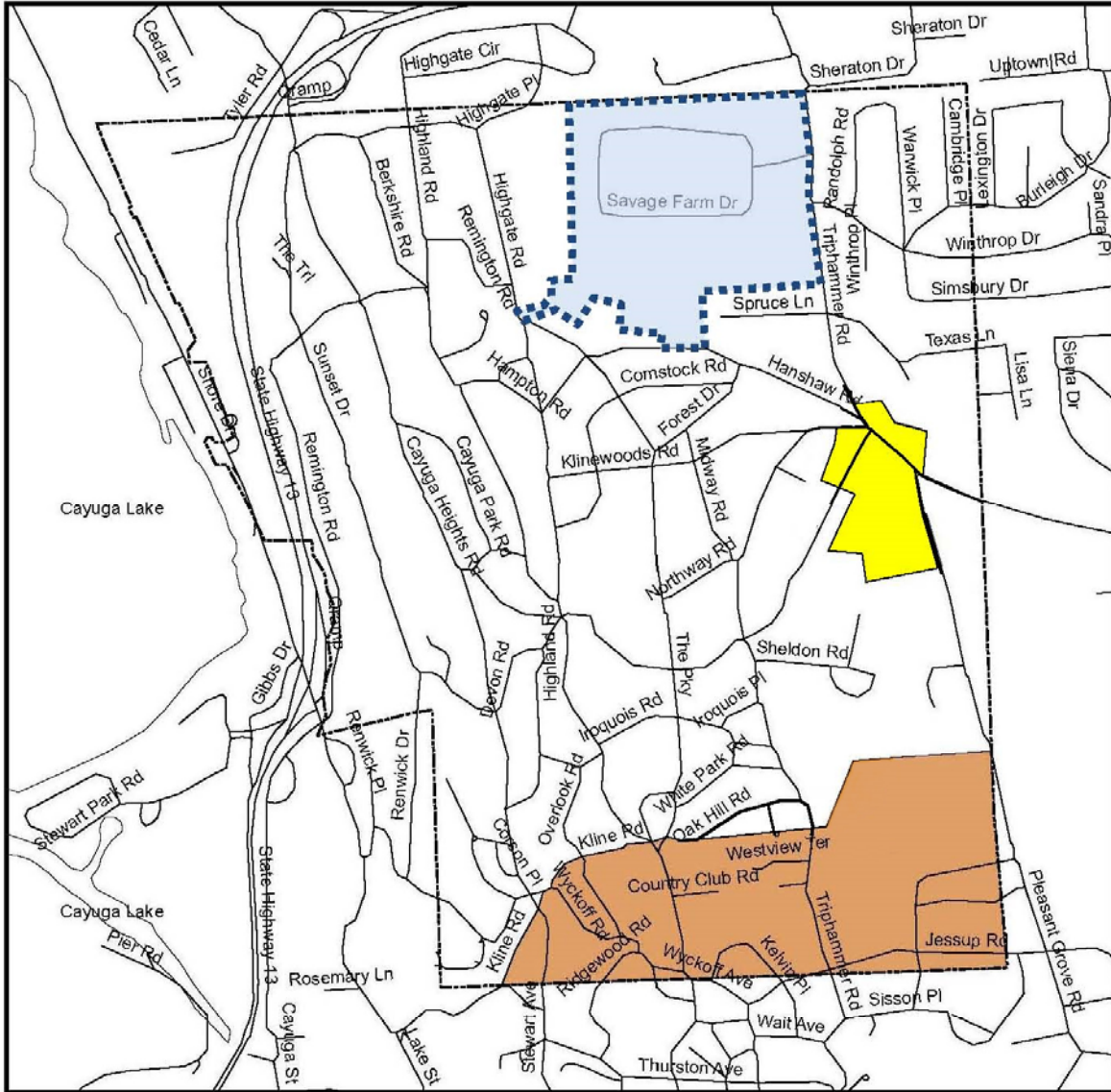
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- churches or other places of worship including ancillary facilities such as convents, parish houses and church schools;
- public libraries and museums, private and parochial schools, nursery schools;
- fraternities and sororities;
- hospitals or sanitariums, except for treatment of patients with mental health issues, and except for nursing or convalescent homes, which are prohibited;
- any use by an institution of higher learning, upon approval by the Village Board of Trustees.

The Commercial District covers the area commonly referred to as Community Corners and including the Corners Community and Village Green shopping centers plus adjacent properties along Hanshaw, Triphammer, Upland and Pleasant Grove roads. Maximum building lot coverage in the Commercial District, including accessory buildings, is 15%. The Commercial District covers approximately 25 acres and permits the following land uses:

- any use permitted in the Residence District and Multiple Housing District;
- retail and services businesses, provided that any manufacture or processing of goods on the premises is clearly incidental to a retail business conducted on the premises;
- business or professional office;
- health and fitness center;
- restaurants or dairy bar for the serving of food and beverages, upon special approval of the Board of Trustees;

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Map Key

- Residence District
- Commercial District
- Multiple Housing District
- Planned Unit Development District

Map 1.5
Existing Zoning

Note: This map is for planning information purposes only and is not the official zoning map for the Village of Cayuga Heights.

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- bank or other financial institution;
- gasoline retail sales station including facilities for minor repairs, upon special approval of the Board of Trustees;
- theater, but not a drive-in theater, upon special approval of the Board of Trustees;
- car-wash operation and car-rental operation, upon special approval of the Board of Trustees;
- and other approved uses.

In addition to the above three zoning districts there is one Planned Unit Development (PUD) zoning district in Cayuga Heights. Located off North Triphammer Road, the district encompasses about 100 acres of land. The objective of the PUD is to permit diverse land uses to be developed together on a single parcel of land as part of a unified plan of development. Land and buildings may be used for any purpose to the extent permitted elsewhere in the Zoning Law, subject to whatever requirements may be imposed by the Village Board of Trustees in its approval. The existing PUD was created in 1993 to permit development of the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community.

The zoning regulations also contain in Section 17-B detailed provisions for the control of telecommunications towers. These were adopted as Local Law No. 3 of 1998 and mirror the standard approaches to controlling such facilities in conformance with the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996.

Despite their relative simplicity and age, until recently the Village zoning regulations have provided adequate protections against unwanted, undesirable or unattractive forms of development. There are, however, a number of issues that have been identified in the review of the current regulations. These issues are addressed in Part 4, Implementation Details.

Regional Planning Context

This plan recognizes the planning initiatives of neighboring municipalities as well as Tompkins County. There are a number of planning initiatives in the region that could affect the Village or influence its policies. These include:

1. The Village of Lansing in 2005 adopted a new comprehensive plan that among other recommendations encourages continued development of housing within the Village; maintaining its status as regional commercial center; and maintaining the status quo with regard to residential zoning densities and development patterns.
2. A recently completed draft update of the Town of Ithaca Comprehensive Plan calls for continued collaboration between the Town and other municipalities, including the Village of Cayuga Heights, to maintain and upgrade water and sewer infrastructure, as well as continued cooperation and communication to jointly provide where feasible other public services at reasonable costs. The Town of Ithaca draft plan update also recommends intermunicipal efforts to protect areas of natural resources that extend across municipal boundaries, such as Renwick Slope.
3. In 2004 Tompkins County adopted a new comprehensive plan to provide a vision for future growth and development. In general terms, the County plan calls for the bulk of future growth to occur within the existing hamlets and villages, the City of Ithaca, and through utilizing vacant lands within existing suburbanized areas. For the purpose of land use analysis, the County plan categorizes the Village of Cayuga Heights as "suburban/concentrated development" and anticipates no major changes for the Village in the coming decades.

In addition to comprehensive planning initiatives by various governments, the Ithaca-Tompkins County Transportation Council (ITCTC) coordinates transportation planning and capital investment in transportation systems in the region. It is responsible for preparing and administering the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP), Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), and Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). These

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documents identify deficiencies in local transportation infrastructure and set local priorities for the allocation of state and federal funds for transportation projects locally.

Part 2. Plan Goals and Objectives

Introduction

Key to an effective plan for the future is a set of clear and concise goals and objectives that provide an overall framework for actions and policies that follow.

Goals are generally statements of a desired outcome, based on the values held by a community at large, but which may not necessarily be attainable. Progress toward any particular goal may not usually be easily quantifiable. Objectives, however, are concrete actions or policies that can be taken to further the goals of a plan. Progress toward completing these actions or enacting specific policies can be measured in some manner.

The following goals and objectives are intended to address specific issues related to the future of the Village of Cayuga Heights. Under each objective, specific recommended courses of action to be carried out by the Board of Trustees and other Village boards are listed.

Quality of Life

Goal QL1: Ensure retention of the Village's residential character, and improve upon the quality of life and economic viability of the Village.

Rationale: The Village is well known for its quality of life, "...a residential village, a quiet village, a village that accepted a few service stores to meet the needs of villagers..." in the words of long-time Mayor Frederick G. Marcham. This community attribute, however, is one that is consistently challenged as communities evolve and

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respond to outside forces over time. Vigilance and proactive local government and civic associations are keys to enhancing the quality of life for a community.

Cayuga Heights needs to explore ways in which the overall quality of life and economic viability of the Village can be maintained and improved. Continued growth beyond the Village, competition with other retail areas, and an aging population are challenges that need to be addressed with a creative mix of strategies. These strategies encompass issue areas such as housing, commercial development and redevelopment, and transportation.

Objective QL1.1: Enhance the growth management tools available to Village boards to ensure a high quality of life in the future.

Recommendation 1.1: Review and update as needed Village zoning regulations to balance future development with the existing scale, density, and character of historic residential neighborhoods.

Recommendation 1.2 Consider as part of a new zoning ordinance an Institutional zoning district to address land use issues related to such educational and other institutional uses.

Recommendation 1.3: Integrate into Village growth management and construction codes standards that will promote environmental sustainability in site design and building construction practices.

Recommendation 1.4: Continue historic role as residential neighborhood providing housing in support of the region's industrial, commercial, and education services-based economy.

Objective QL1.2: Establish design standards for commercial development that ensure future development will complement the architectural character of the original Community Corners buildings.

Recommendation 2.1: Establish design standards for parking, lighting, landscaping, signage, bicycle and pedestrian facilities, and other elements of site design and construction.

Recommendation 2.2: Establish height, setback, and bulk standards for new commercial and residential development in the

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Community Corners area that will complement the original buildings.¹

Recommendation 2.3: Establish design standards to ensure that any future multi-family and commercial development in the Community Corners area will have minimal adverse impact on the quality of life in residential neighborhoods.

Objective QL1.3: **Ensure the continued provision of a comprehensive system of fire, police, and emergency services that protect life and property throughout the community.**

Recommendation 3.1: Identify possible synergies in the provision of emergency management services in partnership with the Cayuga Heights Fire Department, Village Police, and associated public and private agencies, and work cooperatively with these agencies to maintain comprehensive and efficient delivery of emergency services.

Objective QL1.4: **Provide a wide variety of recreational and fitness opportunities for residents of all ages.**

Recommendation 4.1: Ensure that Village residents of all ages and abilities have convenient access to a comprehensive system of parks, playgrounds, and other recreational and fitness facilities.

Recommendation 4.2: Bring cultural events to the Village through collaborations with local businesses, educational institutions, the Tompkins County Arts Council, and other public and private organizations.

¹ For the purpose of this Plan, the Community Corners area is defined as the area on both sides of Hanshaw Road between North Triphammer Road on the west and Pleasant Grove Road on the east. The district extends along both sides of Upland Road approximately 700 feet southward from its intersection with Triphammer Road and Hanshaw Road, and approximately 700 feet southward along the west side of Pleasant Grove Road from its intersection with Hanshaw Road.

Community Character

Goal CC1: Preserve and enhance the rich collection of natural, architectural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources that make the Village a distinctive community.

Rationale: The Village was conceived as a "residential park" by one of its founders, Jared T. Newman. Aspects of that original vision such as meandering streets following topography and capturing views, its mix of lot sizes and architectural styles, and picturesque positioning of buildings in a continuous parkland setting, coupled with a central commercial node to provide neighborhood services and venues for community gatherings continue to distinguish Cayuga Heights as a community. This historic pattern of development is a foundation for future development that emphasizes stewardship of both the built and natural environment within the Village.

Objective CC1.1: Establish a framework for documenting and preserving those aspects of the Village of Cayuga Heights that contribute to its historic character.

Recommendation 1.1: Continue the position of Village Historian to research, document, record, and publicize Village history with the intent to educate Village residents about the history of Cayuga Heights and provide benchmarks for present policies and future Village development.

Recommendation 1.2: Establish a Village Landmarks Preservation Committee that would be charged with developing criteria for identifying both historic structures and historic landscape elements, and creating a framework for their preservation.

Recommendation 1.3: Create a list of Village landmarks to include built structures and key landscape features that are significant in the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture of the community and that should be preserved.

Recommendation 1.4: Establish a role for the Planning Board in protecting the historic resources of the Village through the site plan and subdivision review processes.

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Recommendation 1.5: Develop a program to recognize property owners who restore or protect historic structures or landscapes.

Recommendation 1.6: Create a network of historical markers to educate and promote a sense of place in the Village.

Objective CC1.2: **Better define the Village of Cayuga Heights as a distinct place within the overall Ithaca urban area.**

Recommendation 2.1: Create distinctive entries to the Village.

Recommendation 2.2: Establish design standards for commercial development that would address streetscapes, parking, lighting, landscaping, signage, and other site design elements that contribute to the sense of the Village as a distinctive community.

Recommendation 2.3: Update design standards for fences and walls and setbacks for these structures that will be consistent with the historic parkland character of the Village as seen from the public right-of-way.

Recommendation 2.4: Investigate incorporating a public square or park into the Community Corners area through measures such as reconfiguring streets and reorienting parking.

Recommendation 2.5: Continue historic role as a residential community providing housing in support of the region's industrial, commercial, and education services-based economy.

Ecology and Scenic Assets

Goal ES1: **Preserve the Village's scenic, naturalistic setting while protecting natural resources and improving recreational opportunities.**

Rationale: The Village possesses significant natural resources (e.g. woodlands, streams, wildlife) that provide its residents with scenic beauty, a daily connection to nature, important ecosystem services, and recreational opportunities. Ecosystem services are defined as those naturally occurring functions of the environment including but not limited to habitat provision, stormwater reduction, soil erosion mitigation, air quality improvement and heat island moderation. Due to these many

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benefits, the Village's natural resources should be protected and enhanced where possible so as to preserve the character and quality of Village life both for current residents and future generations.

Objective ES1.1: Protect undeveloped open space and environmentally sensitive areas of the Village.

Recommendation 1.1: Channel future development from environmentally sensitive undeveloped land to previously developed areas to reduce resource consumption and preserve ecosystems.

Recommendation 1.2: Work with Cornell University to develop a framework for the permanent protection of Palmer Woods and other University owned natural areas within the Village.

Recommendation 1.3: Create and publish a map showing undeveloped open space, Unique Natural Areas, and other environmentally sensitive areas of the Village including trails and self-guided nature walks, and post map to Village website.

Recommendation 1.4: Designate the existing Unique Natural Areas within the Village as Critical Environmental Areas as provided for under the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act.

Recommendation 1.5 Work with Kendal at Ithaca to develop a framework for permanently protecting open spaces adjacent to Renwick Brook and maintaining public access to them..

Objective ES1.2: Preserve water quality by minimizing urban runoff pollution, erosion and sedimentation, and stormwater discharge.

Recommendation 2.1: Require all new development and re-development of existing sites to restore to the extent practicable the historic hydrological function of the site.

Recommendation 2.2: Consider site plan approval for construction on steep slopes where slope grade exceeds 15%.

Recommendation 2.3: Avoid development of areas that contain wetlands or that perform wetland ecological functions, including isolated wetlands.

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Recommendation 2.4: Protect and restore riparian buffers by stabilizing and re-vegetating with native plant communities degraded and eroded stream channels.

Recommendation 2.5: Rehabilitate lost streams that have been artificially modified and "daylight" storm water channels using stable geomorphological and vegetative methods to restore ecosystem functions.

Recommendation 2.6: Adopt stream buffer ordinances that will protect riparian corridors from development impacts.

Objective ES1.3: Preserve ecological diversity and sustainability of natural resources.

Recommendation 3.1: Develop and implement an active management plan to control and eliminate invasive plants.

Recommendation 3.2: Preserve plant communities native to the eco-region to promote regional diversity and provide habitat for native wildlife.

Recommendation 3.3: Identify and preserve all vegetation designated as special status by local, state, or federal entities.

Recommendation 3.4: Establish a list of native vegetation to prioritize for protection against removal and publicize this list as part of overall public education program for residents.

Recommendation 3.5: Manage wildlife species such as whitetail deer that threaten species diversity and long term landscape ecology.

Recommendation 3.6: Incorporate measures that prioritize the protection of native trees and consultation with the Village Forester into the Planning Board site plan review process and design standards.

Recommendation 3.7: Promote ecological and sustainable approaches to landscape management such as integrated pest management, use of native plant species, and organic soil amendments.

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Objective ES1.4: Sustainably manage Village street trees.

Recommendation 4.1: With the assistance of the Village Shade Tree Committee, create a management plan for the long term health of Village street trees and to identify a list of native trees to prioritize for protection against removal.

Recommendation 4.2: With the assistance of the Village Shade Tree Committee, monitor the implementation of the Village Street Tree and Shrub Protection Local Law and organize volunteer street tree plantings.

Objective ES1.5: Augment recreational opportunities for Village residents

Recommendation 5.1: Identify opportunities for connectivity of open space and potential linkages for a system of Village trails.

Recommendation 5.2: Explore opportunities to create additional park space from Village owned property and property near the Community Corners area.

Recommendation 5.3: Collaborate with public agencies, Cornell University and other private groups to create a bicycle and pedestrian linkage between the Community Corners area and the University campus.

Recommendation 5.4: Collaborate with the Town of Ithaca to improve and expand the bicycle and pedestrian path network between the Community Corners area and Warren Road in the vicinity of DeWitt Middle School.

Recommendation 5.5: Collaborate with Kendal at Ithaca to create connections to its existing walking path network, and the Community Corners area and neighborhoods to the west and south.

Recommendation 5.6: Create and publish a map showing undeveloped open space and environmentally sensitive areas of the Village including trails and self-guided nature walks, and post map to Village website.

Recommendation 5.7: Create a self-guided “nature walk” within the Village.

Recommendation 5.8: Create a network of marked running trails and streets to encourage the use of less busy streets and promote its use by pedestrians and joggers.

Economy

Goal EC1: Maintain and enhance the economic vitality of the Village and in particular its retail and commercial center.

Rationale: Community character and the quality of life afforded Village residents correlate with a tax base adequate to support public services and infrastructure. It is in the self-interest of Village residents to maintain and enhance the Village as an economically vibrant and desirable place to live, including the Community Corners area, its central economic and governmental node. The Community Corners area is a defining element in the overall character of the community and a valued asset. In recent decades, however, it has experienced increased competition from new retail development beyond the Village and lost many of its everyday retail services. Re-establishment of these lost services and securing new ones would restore its role as a focus of community activity and improve the overall quality of life for Village residents.

Objective EC1.1: Improve the business climate for property and business owners in the Village.

Recommendation 1.1: Establish an advisory committee to facilitate communication and encourage collaboration between Village officials and commercial property and business owners.

Recommendation 1.2: Review and update as needed Village sign regulations to enhance the visibility of businesses while protecting the visual character of the community.

Recommendation 1.3: Organize additional community events in collaboration with local businesses to draw residents and others to the Community Corners area and raise its profile as a community gathering and shopping place.

Recommendation 1.4: Seek out grant funding to leverage private sector investment in the Community Corners area.

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Objective EC 1.2: Facilitate home-based businesses.

Recommendation 2.1: Survey existing small-scale home-based businesses in the Village to identify issues affecting their viability and the ways in which the Village can reduce obstacles to small-scale home-based business ventures.

Recommendation 2.2: Update as needed Village zoning regulations to permit appropriate small-scale home-based businesses while maintaining the Village's residential character.

Objective EC1.3: Re-invigorate the Community Corners area as the economic and social hub of the Village.

Recommendation 3.1: Collaboratively develop and implement a plan for redevelopment of the Community Corners area as a dynamic mixed-use commercial and cultural center for the Village, and a continued defining element for the community.

Recommendation 3.2: Work with property owners, businesses, and tenants to encourage and incentivize the provision of everyday neighborhood retail services in the Community Corners area.

Recommendation 3.3: Investigate use of incentive zoning to encourage development of housing as part of a mixed-use district in the Community Corners area.

Recommendation 3.4: Make streetscape improvements including better sidewalk connections and crosswalks to facilitate and encourage pedestrian access to the Community Corners area.

Recommendation 3.5: Tap the resources of the Tompkins County Planning Department, Tompkins County Area Development, Inc., and other organizations to assist with the redevelopment of the Community Corners area.

Objective EC1.4: Enhance the property tax base in the Village and stabilize or reduce property tax rates for residents and businesses.

Recommendation 3.1: Identify and exploit opportunities to collaborate with the Town of Ithaca and other municipalities to provide shared services that are cost effective and beneficial to the Village.

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Recommendation 3.2: Identify possible synergies in the provision of emergency management services in partnership with the Cayuga Heights Fire Department, Village Police, and associated public and private agencies, and work cooperatively with these agencies to promote more comprehensive and efficient delivery of emergency services.

Housing

Goal H01: Ensure that a variety of high-quality housing options are available to persons wishing to reside in the community.

Rationale: The vision of its founders distinguished Cayuga Heights as a residential village. In recent decades, however, the changing nature of the American household, the encroachment of student housing into historically family neighborhoods, and the need for a variety of housing types to accommodate older residents desirous of aging in place have posed challenges to this vision. Creative thinking is necessary to provide for changing housing needs while protecting community character and the high quality of life for Village residents.

Approaches to land use regulation such as mixed use zoning districts and performance based design standards can further the goal of high-quality housing in the Village while protecting the environment.

Objective H01.1: Update zoning regulations to better meet the needs of Village residents.

Recommendation 1.1: Replace the existing zoning ordinance and the August 2010 amendment with a comprehensive new ordinance that better protects family residential neighborhoods.

Recommendation 1.2: Ensure that new zoning regulations contain definitions that are carefully crafted to ensure clarity in the intent of the regulations and provide adequate protections to Village property and residents.

Recommendation 1.3: Ensure that zoning allows for a range of housing options in the existing commercial zoning district or a new mixed-use zoning district.

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Objective HO1.2: Encourage residential development in the Community Corners area to attract new homeowners and renters.

Recommendation 2.1: Increase the resident population in the Community Corners area to increase provision of commercial services, encourage walkability, and promote the use of public transit and other alternatives to the automobile.

Recommendation 2.2: Review the Commercial District zoning in the Community Corners area to ensure protection for the adjoining residential areas while providing for residential and retail commercial establishments as part of an overall plan for redeveloping the area.

Recommendation 2.3: Consider the impacts of any potential increases in traffic due to potential redevelopment of the Community Corners area as part of any planning effort for the area.

Objective HO1.3: Establish a design review process that will encourage creativity in the design of new and renovated housing to emphasize efficient use of the Village's existing infrastructure and protection of scenic and open space assets.

Recommendation 3.1: Review zoning and subdivision regulations and update them to permit more flexibility in subdivision planning and design, including preservation of open space and riparian corridors.

Recommendation 3.2: Adopt architectural and site design guidelines to assist design professionals in creating proposals for new residential developments.

Recommendation 3.3: Incorporate into site plan review standards that will promote environmental sustainability such as those proposed by the International Green Construction Code and LEED-ND (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design - Neighborhood Development).

Objective HO1.4: Protect historically single- and two-family residential neighborhoods from potential adverse impacts of the conversion of owner-occupied housing to non-owner-occupied housing.

Recommendation 4.1: Replace the existing definitions in the zoning ordinance to fully define the term “family” and also ensure that existing district regulations adequately protect the single- and two-family character of residential neighborhoods.

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Recommendation 4.2: Establish a framework for working with Cornell University, fraternities and sororities, and private landlords to address existing and potential issues with student housing developments within the Village.

Transportation

Goal TR1: **Maintain a transportation system that meets the needs of both residents and non-residents, encourages the use of public transit, creates a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment, and preserves the character and quality of life in the Village.**

Rationale: Transportation systems typically prioritize cars and vehicle movement. The Village's suburban, low density character has encouraged a car dependent environment. In addition, the Village's location bordering Cornell University has resulted in significant pass-through commuter traffic, especially as increased residential development has occurred to the Village's north in the Town and Village of Lansing. Expeditious vehicle movement for residents and non-residents should continue to be provided, but greater attention should be given as well to reducing the number of vehicles on Village streets by encouraging the use of public transit and creating a more pedestrian and bicycle friendly environment.

Objective TR1.1: **Maintain an effective and efficient street network without compromising Village character and walkability.**

Recommendation 1.1: Maintain a maximum of one (1) travel lane in each direction with the exception of turn-lanes at major intersections.

Recommendation 1.2: Review and update as necessary Village street use regulations in order to adequately control overweight truck traffic and protect Village streets from damage, including establishing weight restrictions and standard road use and security agreements.

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Recommendation 1.3: Review and upgrade as needed signage on Village streets and make additional improvements to improve traffic flow along arteries within the Village (e.g. Triphammer, Hanshaw, Pleasant Grove, and Cayuga Heights Roads).

Recommendation 1.4: Ensure any proposal for new development within the Village addresses impacts to the street network and traffic flow.

Recommendation 1.5: Maintain the efficiency and attractiveness of Village streets by establishing better controls on parking in front yard areas and within Village street rights-of-way.

Objective TR1.2: Maintain and upgrade Village streets as necessary.

Recommendation 2.1: Review the current street maintenance schedule and assess whether it sufficiently addresses resident and non-resident needs.

Objective TR1.3: Encourage Public Transit Use.

Recommendation 3.1: Continue working with TCAT (Tompkins Consolidated Area Transit) to build bus shelters and install signage to identify bus stops more clearly.

Objective TR1.4: Reduce conflicts between TCAT and Village residents.

Recommendation 4.1: Establish a formal channel for communication with TCAT that provides for consultation with the Village prior to service changes.

Objective TR1.5: Facilitate safe bicycle travel on Village streets.

Recommendation 5.1: Develop a strategic plan for bikeways in the Village that would integrate connections to existing bikeway networks in surrounding areas, and would incorporate existing resources such as the Ithaca/Tompkins County Transportation Council plan.

Recommendation 5.2: Create bicycle lanes where feasible on arterial Village streets and, where bicycle lanes are not feasible, install signage and pavement markings as appropriate to alert motorists of the presence of bicycle traffic.

Recommendation 5.3: Include redesign of arterial Village streets to accommodate bicycle lanes as part of the regular street repair and maintenance process.

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Recommendation 5.4: Install bicycle storage racks at Marcham Hall and at major intersections in the Village along TCAT bus routes.

Recommendation 5.5: Incorporate relevant provisions of the International Green Construction Code and LEED-ND related to bicycle facilities into Village site plan approval criteria.

Objective TR1.6: Maintain, expand, and improve the sidewalk network in the Village where needed.

Recommendation 6.1: Develop and implement a strategic plan for Village sidewalks including identifying and addressing gaps in the existing sidewalk network and ensuring the safety of Village pedestrians, especially residents of the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community and children walking to Cayuga Heights Elementary School, Boynton Middle School, and Ithaca High School.

Recommendation 6.2: Conduct a “walkability audit” with Village residents and commercial property owners to identify and prioritize pedestrian improvements.

Recommendation 6.3: Ensure in site plan review that any new site development prioritizes pedestrian connections to the existing Village sidewalk network and provides safe pedestrian circulation within the developed site.

Recommendation 6.4: Consider traffic calming measures on arterial streets such as raised intersections or increased street tree plantings to lower traffic speeds and increase pedestrian safety.

Recommendation 6.5: Coordinate sidewalk repair with regularly scheduled street repair and maintenance.

Recommendation 6.6: Consider widening existing sidewalks where space permits.

Public Services and Utilities

Goal PS1: Maintain and improve as necessary a system of services and supporting infrastructure that meets the needs of the residents in the Village, improves energy efficiency in Village operations and facilities, and reduces greenhouse gas emissions.

Rationale: Public service and utility systems are essential to maintaining the daily operations of the Village and the quality of life its residents enjoy. Efficient and economical provision of high quality services form the basis for and make possible other Village enhancements. Today, however, the provision of public services and utilities must take into consideration more than pipes, bricks and mortar, public safety, and other services. According to the Tompkins County 2020 Energy Strategy, local governments can also play an important role in efforts to reduce our impact on climate. The adoption of improved energy efficiency measures for building facilities and public sector vehicle fleet emissions reduction improvements have the potential to reduce community greenhouse gas emissions.

Objective PS1.1: Ensure that existing public infrastructure is maintained and upgraded as necessary.

Recommendation 1.1: Establish and update strategic plans for all utility systems, beginning with base plan mapping, capacity benchmarks, and planning for obsolescence replacement.

Recommendation 1.2: Include utility appraisal in conjunction with planned street improvements.

Recommendation 1.3: Ensure any new development within the Village addresses impacts to the public infrastructure.

Recommendation 1.4: Seek opportunities to partner with adjacent municipalities and institutions for funding contiguous infrastructure projects.

Recommendation 1.5: Seek opportunities to partner with businesses and utilities to identify and enact sustainable practices.

Recommendation 1.6: Investigate feasibility and cost of relocation and burial of overhead line utilities with re-development of the Business District to reduce “visual clutter.”

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Recommendation 1.7: Adopt policies for better control of street lighting to reduce the impacts of street light glare and light trespass on adjoining properties and reduce light haze that washes out the night sky.

Objective PS1.2: Maintain and upgrade Village fire protection/prevention service and police protection as necessary.

Recommendation 2.1: Make first aid equipment (defibrillators) available in Village public buildings and select Village vehicles, and provide training for Village employees.

Recommendation 2.2: Update and publicize the Village's Emergency Preparedness Plan.

Objective PS1.3: Maintain and upgrade Village trash and recycling services as necessary.

Recommendation 3.1: Partner with Tompkins County entities to promote increased sustainability measures.

Objective PS1.4: Maintain and upgrade Village government service as necessary.

Recommendation 4.1: Expand and renovate Marcham Hall to ensure adequate space, accessibility for all Village residents, and the efficient function of Village agencies.

Recommendation 4.2: Regularly assess approaches to ensuring the continuing success of fire protection in the Village.

Recommendation 4.3: Regularly review the various governance procedures utilized by Village boards and committees to ensure transparency and compliance with New York State laws.

Recommendation 4.5: Continue to exploit opportunities to collaborate with the Town of Ithaca and other municipalities to provide shared services that are cost effective and beneficial to the Village.

Recommendation 4.6: Establish formal communication links with Cornell University, the Town of Ithaca, the City of Ithaca, and the Village of Lansing planning departments for proactive development discussions.

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Recommendation 4.7: Ensure that Village records management and digitizing of Village documents promotes both preservation of important documents and enhanced public access to public records.

Objective PS1.5: Maintain the opportunity for high quality, close to home elementary school education for Village families.

Recommendation 5.1: Establish ongoing dialogue with the Ithaca City School District to assess the needs of Cayuga Heights Elementary School and Northeast Elementary School.

Recommendation 5.2: Ensure safe access to Cayuga Heights Elementary School and Northeast Elementary School on Village streets.

Objective PS1.6: Develop a program to identify and carry out energy efficiency monitoring and improvements in Village-owned buildings and vehicles.

Recommendation 6.1: Adopt a goal of reducing greenhouse gas emissions from Village facilities and operations by 20% by 2020 and by 80% by 2050.

Recommendation 6.2: Evaluate new investments in facilities, infrastructure, and equipment for their impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

Objective PS1.7: Use Marcham Hall as a model for sustainable practices.

Recommendation 7.1: Incorporate sustainable building design and landscape features in the re-development of Marcham Hall so that it may serve as a model of sustainability for the rest of the Village.

Objective PS1.8: Review and update the Comprehensive Plan in ten years.

Recommendation 8.1: Re-assess and revise as needed the Comprehensive Plan to ensure it reflects the Village's needs and facilitates continued provision of services to Village residents.

Part 3. Plan Implementation Matrix

The goals objectives and recommendations set forth in Part 2 lay out a proposed agenda for the Village of Cayuga Heights. Their implementation will require a coordinated effort on the part of the various Village boards and committees, and Village departments. In some cases, taking action will require collaboration with Tompkins County, adjacent municipalities, or private non-governmental agencies.

In all cases, the ability of the Village to carry out the Comprehensive Plan will be dependent upon the availability of required resources. These resources include fiscal resources, staff resources, and the time available to the numerous elected and appointed officials who are committed to provide high quality, efficient government services to Village residents. This Plan recognizes that those resources are finite and years, even decades, will be required to achieve some objectives. Moreover, a number of recommendations will require multiple actions and collaborations that will extend over a number of years before they are completely implemented.

Prioritizing strategies and actions is thus critical to successful plan implementation. In the following matrix, the objectives set forth in Part 2 are listed. Each objective is then catalogued as:

1. Short Term – objective which should be achieved within the next 3 years;
2. Medium Term – objective which should be achieved within the next 3 to 7 years;
3. Long Term – objective which should be achieved, but which is less of a priority or which is of a complexity or scale that it is expected to take 7 or more years to achieve;
4. Ongoing – an initiative or policy which should be implemented as soon as practicable, but which will be implemented continuously over the course of the Plan.

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Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix			
<i>(Short Term: 0-3 years; Medium Term: 3-7 years; Long Term: 7+ years)</i>			
Objective	Strategy or Action	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe
Objective QL1.1	Enhance the growth management tools available to Village boards to ensure a high quality of life in the future.	Planning Board	Short Term
Objective QL1.2	Establish design standards for commercial development that ensure future development will complement the architectural character of original Community Corners buildings.	Planning Board	Short Term
Objective QL1.3	Ensure the continued provision of a comprehensive system of fire, police, and emergency services that protect life and property throughout the community.	Board of Trustees	Ongoing
Objective QL1.4	Provide a wide variety of recreational and fitness opportunities for residents of all ages.	Planning Board	Medium Term
Objective CC1.1	Establish a framework for documenting and preserving those aspects of the Village of Cayuga Heights that contribute to its historic character.	Board of Trustees	Short Term
Objective CC1.2	Better define the Village of Cayuga Heights as a distinct place within the overall Ithaca urban area.	Planning Board	Medium Term
Objective ES1.1	Protect undeveloped open space and environmentally sensitive areas of the Village.	Planning Board	Ongoing
Objective ES1.2	Preserve water quality by minimizing urban runoff pollution, erosion and sedimentation, and stormwater discharge.	Public Works Committee	Ongoing
Objective ES1.3	Preserve ecological diversity and sustainability of natural resources.	Planning Board	Ongoing
Objective ES1.4	Sustainably manage the Village's trees.	Shade Tree Committee	Ongoing
Objective ES1.5	Augment recreational opportunities for Village residents.	Planning Board	Medium Term
Objective EC1.1	Improve the business climate for property and business owners in the Village.	Board of Trustees	Short Term
Objective EC 1.2	Facilitate home-based businesses.	Planning Board	Short Term
Objective EC1.3	Re-invigorate the Community Corners area as the economic and social hub of the Village.	Planning Board	Medium Term
Objective EC1.4	Enhance the property tax base in the Village and stabilize or reduce property tax rates for residents and businesses.	Board of Trustees	Ongoing
Objective HO1.1	Update zoning regulations to better meet the needs of Village residents.	Planning Board	Short Term

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Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix			
<i>(Short Term: 0-3 years; Medium Term: 3-7 years; Long Term: 7+ years)</i>			
Objective	Strategy or Action	Lead Responsibility	Timeframe
Objective HO1.2	Encourage residential development in the Community Corners area to attract new homeowners and renters.	Planning Board	Short Term
Objective HO1.3	Establish a design review process that will encourage creativity in housing design to emphasize efficient use of existing infrastructure and protection of scenic and open space assets.	Planning Board	Medium Term
Objective HO1.4	Protect historically single- and two-family residential neighborhoods from potential adverse impacts of the conversion of owner-occupied housing to non-owner-occupied housing.	Board of Trustees	Short Term
Objective TR1.1	Maintain an effective and efficient street network without compromising Village character and walkability.	Public Works Department	Medium Term
Objective TR1.2	Maintain and upgrade Village streets as necessary.	Public Works Department	Ongoing
Objective TR1.3	Encourage public transit Use.	Board of Trustees	Medium Term
Objective TR1.4	Reduce conflicts between TCAT and Village residents.	Board of Trustees	Short Term
Objective TR1.5	Facilitate safe bicycle travel on Village streets.	Planning Board	Medium Term
Objective TR1.6	Maintain, expand, and improve the sidewalk network in the Village where needed.	Planning Board	Medium Term
Objective PS1.1	Ensure that existing public infrastructure is maintained and upgraded as necessary.	Public Works Department	Ongoing
Objective PS1.2	Maintain and upgrade Village fire protection/prevention service and police protection as necessary.	Board of Trustees	Ongoing
Objective PS1.3	Maintain and upgrade Village trash and recycling services as necessary.	Public Works Department	Ongoing
Objective PS1.4	Maintain and upgrade Village government service as necessary.	Board of Trustees	Ongoing
Objective PS1.5	Maintain the opportunity for high quality, close to home elementary school education for Village families.	Board of Trustees	Ongoing
Objective PS1.6	Develop a program to identify and carry out energy efficiency monitoring and improvements in Village-owned buildings and vehicles.	Board of Trustees	Ongoing
Objective PS1.7	Use Marcham Hall as a model for sustainable practices.	Board of Trustees	Short Term
Objective PS1.8	Review and update as needed the Comprehensive Plan in ten years.	Planning Board	Long Term

Part 4. Plan Implementation Details

Many of the goals, objectives and recommendations in Part 2 are straightforward. A number of them, however, will involve multiple actions and engage multiple boards and Village residents, property owners and other entities in the implementation process. This section outlines in further detail recommended actions and implementation strategies for attaining the more challenging objectives.

They are organized under the same headings as Part 2: Quality of Life; Community Character; Ecology and Scenic Assets; Housing; Economy; Transportation; and Public Services and Utilities.

Quality of Life

Implementation Strategy 1.1: Land Use Regulations (Obj. QL1.1)

As stated in Part 1, Inventory, in the review of current zoning, a number of issues have been identified in existing land use regulations. Following are some of these issues.

1. Statements of purpose for the Residence, Multiple Housing, and Commercial zoning districts are not given. Such statements can provide valuable guidance to municipal officials and boards charged with interpretation and enforcement of land use regulations.
2. There are no definitions for many of the terms utilized. Definitions exist only for "family," "building height," "sign" (with six associated definitions), "building face," "building front," "shopping center," and several associated with "telecommunications." There are no definitions for key zoning terms such as "yard," "frontage," "lot depth," "dwelling," "retail," "professional office," or

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"institution of higher learning" among other terms. An important component of any set of land use regulations is a comprehensive glossary of terms.

3. The current definition of "family" (Sect. 2) appears outdated. It can be interpreted to mean that marriage is a prerequisite for identification as a family, and also can be interpreted as excluding adopted children as members of a family. A common definition of family today is: *"...two or more persons occupying a single dwelling unit, related by blood, marriage or adoption, living and cooking together as a single housekeeping unit, or two unrelated persons occupying a single dwelling unit and living and cooking together as a single housekeeping unit..."*
4. The zoning regulations permit "public" schools (undefined) in the Residence District, but not "parochial" schools. No basis is presented for permitting parochial schools in the Multiple Housing District, but not in the Residence District.
5. Churches and other places of worship and their ancillary facilities are restricted to the Multiple Housing District. Although the Village is practically built out and construction of any new church, synagogue, mosque, or other religious institution may be remote, the possibility does exist and religious institutions are frequently located within residential neighborhoods.
6. Nursing homes are currently prohibited. Again, although the Village is practically built out and the possibility of developing such facilities may be remote, it does exist. Moreover, the zoning regulations do not provide for newer type housing for the elderly or disabled that may enable older Village residents to continue to live in the community.
7. Bed and breakfast establishments are not permitted. A number of large homes in the Village, in attractive settings on relatively large lots, could be operated by resident owners as bed and breakfast inns. Explicit design and operating

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standards, however, would be needed to protect neighboring properties from adverse impacts.

8. Building lot coverage is 12 percent for the Multiple Housing District and 15 percent for the Commercial District. Lot coverage of 10 to 15 percent is common and appropriate for lower density, single-family residential areas. In commercial and multi-family housing development, depending on parking requirements, lot coverage could be increased, providing for more efficient land use while controlling impacts on neighboring properties through buffering and yard setbacks, restrictions on building height and massing, and landscape screenings.
9. No specific parking requirements for multi-family and commercial development (Section 14) exist. This can lead to both too little and too much parking. Data available through the Institute of Transportation Engineers and other organizations can help the Village establish parking requirements for non-residential development.
10. The standards for the Board of Trustees granting special approvals, such as "... a need for such use exists for the convenience of the neighborhood and that the general welfare of the Village will be served and that there will be no excessive noise in connection with the use..." and "... the location and size of the use, the nature and intensity of the operation involved, and the size of the site in relation to it, the location of the site with respect to roads giving access to it, and any other reasonable requirements necessary to keep the proposed use in harmony with the appropriate and orderly development..." are vague. In New York State, in general, the listing of a use as being permitted by special approval is considered a legislative determination by the municipality that the use is an appropriate use for the district(s) in which it is permitted. The general intent of special approval reviews is to identify potential adverse impacts of a proposed development and set conditions of approval that ensure those impacts are mitigated. The burden of proof in denying or requiring substantial mitigation measures for special approvals is on the municipality. By establishing explicit design standards to be

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- met by applicants for special permits, the Village can protect its interests and reduce the potential for controversy and conflict.
11. The standards for Planning Board approval of site plan applications outlined in Section 23 (II) should be reviewed. The site plan review process is intended to be a technical review of a proposed development for compliance with zoning and with generally accepted design and engineering standards, as well as to insure the health and safety of the general public entering and using the facility. The legislative determination by the municipality that the use is appropriate for the district(s) in which it is permitted has already been made. Approval criteria such as "location and site of the use," "nature and intensity of the operation involved," "size and topography," "location and dimension of buildings," "landscaping and architectural features," and "other factors reasonably related to the health, safety and general welfare," without explicit standards, can lead to controversy and conflict. As with the special approval process, anticipating potential impacts of potential developments subject to site plan approval and having in place more explicit design standards could inoculate the Planning Board against potential conflict and streamline the review process.
 12. As currently written, the regulations governing the size, location and number of signs [Section 17-A(B)(2)] make it difficult for retail and service establishments in the two shopping centers in the Community Corners area to be "seen" and recognized by motorists. Revising the existing sign regulations in order to permit larger signage along streets and on individual store facades could enhance merchant visibility and increase commercial activity, provided this is done in a manner that protects the character of the Community Corners area.
 13. The "On premises sign" restriction in Section 17(A) should be reviewed. Over the past decade, the federal courts have ruled in a number of cases that municipalities may regulate the size and location of signs, but that the regulation of sign content may be a violation of free speech.

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14. The language used in the criteria set forth in Section 17(F)(3) for the approval of a sign permit application, such as “the smallest sign which will suit the purpose shall be the guide,” “a sign with only a few letters need not be as large as one with many letters,” and “the character of the neighborhood,” appears subjective. Generally, municipalities are free to regulate size and location, but attempts to regulate design without more explicit standards can create controversy and conflict.
15. The zoning regulations currently do not address residential solar energy or wind energy installations. Although residential solar energy installations may be appropriate, wind powered energy systems may not be. While existing mature vegetation may likely mitigate the visual impacts of wind turbines, lot sizes, noise impacts, and safety considerations may render them unsuitable within the Village.
16. The zoning regulations currently do not list natural gas drilling as a permitted land use. Industrial activities have historically not been part of the fabric of Cayuga Heights and have not been listed as permitted uses anywhere within the Village. Moreover, given the land requirements of gas drilling operations, the essentially built out character of the Village, the ecological sensitivity of the undeveloped lands within its boundaries, and regulatory setback requirements, appropriate sites for drilling within the Village are unlikely to be identified.

A number of the above issues are technical in nature and do not have major land use implications. They may be resolved relatively easily. A number of them, however, involve major land use decisions and should be considered in the context of an overall comprehensive planning process. Accordingly, the Village should consider establishing a task force of Village officials and residents for the purpose of reviewing existing zoning and making changes in land use regulations. The task force approach is suggested because it will bring together members of the Village bodies key to administering the regulations, involve residents early on in the process, and reduce the burden on any one board or staff member.

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Below are some recommendations based on the review of existing zoning that the task force may wish to consider.

1. Creation of a new Institutional zoning district that would apply specific controls to student housing such as dormitories, fraternities, and sororities, covering in particular the design and location of parking, and provisions for buffering between such housing and single-family housing. This Institutional district would cover certain areas currently within the existing Multiple Family zoning district and also permit educational institution uses such as the Africana Research Center, churches, and public and private schools.
2. A review of the extent and use of the existing Commercial district in the area that includes the Corners Community and Village Green shopping centers and surrounding areas. This could facilitate redevelopment of the area as a mixed use medium density residential and commercial area. A revised district ordinance could include detailed building height and bulk regulations designed to encourage living units above and interspersed with commercial space. It could also include parking guidelines and standards designed to encourage greater levels of pedestrian activity and attractive space for social interaction and community events.
3. Creation of a Conservation Overlay district that would provide additional controls on development of steep slopes, along stream corridors, within wooded areas, on sites adjacent to wetland areas, and on properties contained within and bordering UNAs.
4. Modifications to the existing Residence district regulations to limit intrusion of non-owner-occupied housing, but also, through special approval review process, allow other uses traditionally found in residential areas such as churches, assisted living facilities, nursing homes, etc. Include in the special approval process specific design standards for parking, landscaping and buffering from adjacent family homes. Bed and breakfast establishments

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operated by the resident of the premises may also be an appropriate use, subject to special approval and design standards.

5. Modifications to the existing Multiple Housing district ordinance to better control parking area size, design and location, increase permitted building lot coverage from 12% to 30%, and provide site design and buffering standards protecting adjacent single- and two-family homes. Increasing lot coverage as proposed could provide for additional density on existing sites, while still maintaining adequate buffer areas, green space for tenants, and a suburban character.
6. Zoning definitions that are carefully crafted to ensure clarity in the intent of the regulations and provide adequate protections to Village property and residents.
7. Language codifying the longstanding policy of not promoting industrial development within the boundaries of the Village while maintaining the Village's historic role in the regional economy.

Any of the changes contemplated above must be balanced with minimizing their potential for negative environmental impact and with protecting the character of the Village's residential neighborhoods. Helpful in achieving these objectives would be adoption of more explicit design and performance standards for commercial, multi-family housing, and other non-residential land uses. Such standards could include:

1. Requirements for vegetated buffer areas between non-residential and residential development that include specific requirements governing type, number and minimum sizes for vegetation and for screen fences to be utilized;
2. Outdoor lighting design standards for non-residential development that would eliminate the potential for glare, "light trespass" onto adjacent properties, and the projection of light into the atmosphere;

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3. Minimum requirements for and ceilings on the maximum number of parking spaces for non-residential land uses, as well as design standards for parking lots that set minimum requirements for size and number of trees (per parking space), parking bay layout, and stormwater management facilities;
4. Minimum landscaping requirements for non-residential development, including size and numbers of plant materials;
5. Minimum standards for useable open space and recreational areas for residents of multi-family housing developments;
6. Specific standards for siting certain activities, for instance, gasoline pump islands and canopies. Although citizens and municipal officials elsewhere have often expressed a desire to better screen such uses, for instance, by locating them to the rear of the site, few municipalities have actually explicitly codified the requirement in their zoning regulations. The gas station convenience store is used here as an example because it has become a dominant feature of the landscape and also a major source of conflict in zoning and site plan review.

Implementation Strategy 1.2: Recreation (Obj. QL1.4)

The Village of Cayuga Heights should partner with the Town of Ithaca, the Village of Lansing, the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community, and Cornell University to assure continued convenient access to parks, playgrounds, and other recreational facilities. Although the lack of available space within the Village limits opportunities for the development of new parks, there are nearby park and recreational facilities in the Village of Lansing and adjacent areas of the Town of Ithaca. This approach can enable the Village to develop and maintain desired facilities in a cost effective and efficient manner.

The redevelopment of the Community Corners area into a mixed use neighborhood would also afford the opportunity to develop a new public space at

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the Village's center. This public space could provide valuable green space and also function as a gathering spot for the community, much in the manner of a New England green or commons. It might offer additionally a small play area for children and a venue for concerts and other community gatherings and cultural events. This area could provide adequate room for a gathering of 400 to 500 residents for a concert or other event in an area safely removed from streets and conflicting surrounding uses.

The Village should also work with Kendal at Ithaca to investigate ways in which all or part of its property adjacent to Renwick Brook can be permanently protected as public open space and to identify suitable uses for that space.

Community Character

Implementation Strategy 2.1: Historic Preservation (Obj. CC1.1)

The preservation of Jared Newman's historic "residential park" concept with its rich composition of natural, architectural, cultural, historic, and scenic resources will require a number of implementation measures. The Village should take steps in the near future to ensure that Newman's legacy is protected in the coming decades, including the following.

1. Establish a Village Landmarks Preservation Committee. This committee would be charged with developing criteria for identifying both historic structures and historic landscape elements, and creating a framework for their preservation. The committee can tap local resources such as Historic Ithaca and Tompkins County as well as the New York State Historic Preservation Office in its work. It can also advise the Planning Board on issues pertaining to historic structures or spaces within the Village.

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2. Create a list of Village landmarks or districts to include built structures and key landscape features. Criteria for such designation could include structures or landscapes that are significant in the history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture of the community. The Village would have the option of designating such landmarks and districts in order to highlight their significance. The Village could also consider the creation of a landmarks preservation ordinance that could empower the Village to review alterations to historic structures. This would be similar to the practice in the City of Ithaca and other cities which take a more active role in protecting historic resources.
3. Expand the number of historic markers that would highlight the rich history and notable figures that have lived in the Village. There are a number of homes of early farmers, as well as homes of internationally known people such as Hans Bethe within the Village. Another topic of such markers could be the origins of place names such as Renwick or The Parkway. The historic marker installed by the Town of Ithaca in front of Marcham Hall in 1996 would be a template for this expanded program to educate Village residents about their community's history.

Implementation Strategy 2.2: Village Entry (Obj. CC1.2)

Today, the entry points to the Village of Cayuga Heights are marked by a series of standard green highway informational and white highway regulatory signs clustered alongside the street on gray metal posts. The Village can create distinctive entrances by replacing these non-descript signs with new signs custom designed and sited in a landscaped setting to provide an attractive welcome to the Village. Within standards set by the NYS Department of Transportation, the mandatory regulatory signs can be organized in a more aesthetic manner. The nominal investment required could be funded through donations of time and money by interested Village residents.

Ecology and Scenic Assets

Implementation Strategy 3.1: Significant Open Space (Obj. ES1.1)

Enhanced zoning regulations are required to better protect the significant natural resources that provide Village residents with scenic beauty, a daily connection to nature, important ecosystem services, and recreational opportunities.

To protect this as a legacy for future generations, the Village should take steps to channel future development from environmentally sensitive undeveloped lands wherever possible and to better control activities that may occur in such areas in the future. Implementation of a protection strategy should include two key actions.

1. Creation of a Conservation Overlay district that would provide additional controls on development of steep slopes, along stream corridors, within wooded areas, adjacent to wetland areas, and on properties bordering Unique Natural Areas (UNAs). Such controls should include minimum setbacks from stream centerlines and, where present, ravine edges, limits on clearing and cutting of vegetation on steep slope areas, and limits on lot coverage by buildings, driveways, and other improvements that require alterations to site topography and vegetation. A site plan approval process for new construction in such areas would provide the Village the opportunity to utilize the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process to assess potential environmental impacts of such activity.
2. The Village, in collaboration with Cornell University, should establish measures to permanently protect from development the University owned Palmer Woods and Newman Tract natural areas. These two areas have been recognized for their significance as open space and ecological resources through designation as Tompkins County Unique Natural Areas and through

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their incorporation into the Cornell Plantations Natural Areas system. These designations, however, do not provide adequate protection from development or other activities that may damage or destroy their ecological integrity. If the two areas are not already protected through such instruments, one potential measure would be for the Village of Cayuga Heights to acquire conservation easements from Cornell University, through purchase or by donation.

Education is another effective means of protecting critical open space assets within the Village. To better inform residents of the rich natural heritage in Cayuga Heights, the Village should develop informational materials for residents as well as prospective residents. These could be in the following forms:

1. A map showing undeveloped open space, Unique Natural Areas, and other environmentally sensitive areas of the Village including trails and self-guided nature walks. The map could be posted on the Village website and included in a newsletter.
2. A brochure including map and narrative that could be available in Marcham Hall and other locations, such as local real estate offices, for distribution to prospective new residents.

Implementation Strategy 3.2: Stormwater Management (Obj. ES1.2)

Over the course of the Village's development, various streams have been altered and water quality negatively affected. In the coming years, the Village should take steps to reduce the impacts of new development on water quality and begin efforts to restore water quality. Toward these ends, the Village should enact site plan design standards that would require development projects to maintain the historic hydrological functions of the site. Such standards would entail controlling stormwater runoff and also treatment of stormwater runoff for urban stormwater

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pollutants. New approaches to stormwater management that emphasize retention of stormwater onsite and infiltration into the ground, such as bioswales and pervious pavements, could be emphasized. Establishing these design standards would also assist Planning Board members without specific expertise in stormwater issues to evaluate proposed site designs.

In addition to site design standards, the Village should also integrate where feasible bioswales and other stormwater management and treatment practices in the design of Village streets. The Village should publicize such practices and encourage homeowners to consider approaches such as bioswales, rain gardens, and pervious driveway pavements at their residences.

Implementation Strategy 3.3: Riparian Resources (Obj. ES1.2)

The Village should take additional steps to protect riparian resources including the following.

1. Completion of an inventory and mapping of wetland areas within the Village, using the criteria established by the federal government in the late 1980s.¹ These criteria provide a consistent framework for identifying wetland areas, including small areas of the type that can be found in the Village. These wetland areas and a surrounding buffer area can then be included within the Conservation Overlay zone proposed in 1.1 above.
2. In collaboration with the Soil and Water Conservation District and Village landowners, identify degraded and eroded stream channels and drainage swales and restore riparian buffers by stabilizing and re-vegetating with

¹ The 1987 Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual and 1989 Federal Manual for Identifying and Delineating Jurisdictional Wetlands established specific criteria for identifying wetlands.

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native plant communities. This would reduce erosion and sedimentation in local streams and ultimately Cayuga Lake.

3. In collaboration with the Soil and Water Conservation District, identify streams within the Village that have been channelized or buried for long stretches in culvert pipes. Where feasible, such streams should be day-lighted and the streambeds rehabilitated using stable geomorphological and vegetative methods to restore ecosystem functions.

Implementation Strategy 3.4: Ecological Diversity (Obj. ES1.3)

The natural ecology of Cayuga Heights has been disrupted over the course of several decades. There are measures, however, that the Village should implement to protect existing assets and restore some balance to the ecology. The Village Forester can take a leadership role in the following strategies.

1. Identifying and preserving plant communities native to the eco-region, and vegetation designated as special status by local, state, or federal entities. A number of native tree species are included in this category. Because the Village is essentially built out, this process is viewed as being primarily one of identifying such species and educating Village residents of the desirability of preserving them.
2. Develop educational materials that list important native plant species and encourage Village residents to utilize such plants in their landscaping. This can be done in collaboration with Cornell Cooperative Extension. The information could be available in a number of forms, including a brochure available at Marcham Hall and on the Village website.
3. Incorporate into the Planning Board site plan review process design standards and measures that prioritize the protection of native trees. The

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site plan review process can be an effective tool in the protection of significant native vegetation on private properties within the Village. The Planning Board, in consultation with the Village Forester, should establish specific standards to protect such trees and incorporate them into the Zoning Code. These standards would include basic requirements such as incorporation of such trees into the site design and minimum design standards, such as setbacks from curbs and paved areas and other measures to protect the root structure and canopy of the trees.

Implementation Strategy 3.5: Street Trees (Obj. ES1.4)

The Village should charge the Shade Tree Committee with creating and implementing a street tree management plan for the long term health of the trees within Village street right-of-ways and other Village properties. The Committee would also develop and maintain a list of native trees within the public right-of-ways to prioritize for protection against removal.

Economy

Implementation Strategy 4.1: Community Corners Advisory Committee (Obj. EC1.1)

The Village needs to take action in the coming years to maintain and enhance the Community Corners area as a desirable, economically vibrant retail and government center. The Community Corners area is a defining element in the overall character of the community and a valued asset, but increased competition from new retail development beyond the Village has eroded its traditional place in the fabric of Village life.

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The Village should establish an advisory committee to promote the Community Corners area and coordinate the efforts of businesses in the Village to redevelop and revitalize the retail sector there. In carrying out its mission, the new organization would:

1. Advise the Village Board of Trustees and other bodies on matters pertaining to the Community Corners area business community and on issues Village businesses face in their daily operations;
2. Prepare a strategic plan for the revitalization of the retail sector, including a plan to elevate the profile of the Community Corners area in the greater Ithaca region as a retail center;
3. Organize community events to draw residents and others to the Community Corners area and raise its profile as a community gathering and shopping place;
4. Seek out public and private grant funding to leverage the private sector investment in the Community Corners area.

Implementation Strategy 4.2: Home-Based Businesses (Obj. EC1.2)

Home-based businesses are a growing economic sector both nationwide and potentially in Cayuga Heights. The Village should facilitate home-based businesses that are compatible with the character of its neighborhoods. To further this objective the Village should:

1. Survey existing small-scale home-based businesses in the Village to identify issues affecting their viability and the means by which the Village can reduce obstacles to small-scale home-based business ventures;

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2. Update as needed Village zoning regulations to permit appropriate small-scale home-based businesses while still maintaining the Village's residential character.

Implementation Strategy 4.3: Area Plan for Community Corners (Obj. EC1.3)

The Village, in collaboration with the Community Corners advisory committee, property owners, and individual businesses, should develop and implement a plan for the redevelopment of the Community Corners area as a dynamic mixed-use commercial and cultural center for the Village. This plan would include a new vision for the area and detailed recommendations for implementation. It could also align well with Tompkins County's proposed nodal development strategy. Integral to any plan would be consideration of the original buildings and landscape that constitute the area's historic identity, while revitalizing the Village center with a mix of retail, service, and residential uses.

The process of developing a plan for the Community Corners area should include a broad range of stakeholders. These would include property and business owners in and near the designated area, Village officials, and members of the general public. A team of experts in planning, design, and community participation could be assembled to guide the community in its efforts to envision the future of the Community Corners area.

Housing

Implementation Strategy 5.1: Expand Housing Options (Obj. HO1.1, Obj. HO1.2)

The Village should address the changing nature of the American household and the need for a variety of housing types. It can do so by implementing a number of measures in the coming years.

Accessory apartments currently allowed in Residence zoning districts can provide the opportunity for older Village residents to age in place, and for others who may have special needs. The concept can also enable Village residents to provide housing for parents and other older relatives. The Village should ensure such opportunities exist in any revisions made to the Zoning Ordinance.

Slightly adjusting residential density upwards could encourage a greater range of housing options, reduce resource use, increase provision of commercial services, and promote walkability.

Implementation Strategy 5.2: Creative Residential Development (Obj. HO1.3)

The Village should review and, where necessary, revise its existing subdivision regulations to permit more flexibility in subdivision planning and design. The use of cluster subdivision strategies in new development can achieve a number of planning objectives, including preservation of open space, protection of riparian corridors, and expanding the stock of affordable housing.

In addition to flexibility in subdivision design, the Village could also consider a new set of architectural design and site design criteria. Besides addressing

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aesthetic and public safety considerations, these design criteria might incorporate relevant provisions of the International Green Construction Code and LEED-ND into residential site plan and subdivision standards.

Transportation

Implementation Strategy 6.1: Street Infrastructure (Obj. TR1.1)

The Village has not adopted the practice of widening streets in response to increased traffic. In addition, the original terrain-following alignments of Village streets have remained intact. By maintaining a maximum of one travel lane in each direction and limiting investments in increased capacity to adding turn lanes at key intersections, the Village has been able to balance the efficient movement of vehicular traffic with preserving community character. This strategy should be continued in the coming years. Additionally, the Village should couple any proposed improvements with traffic calming measures on arterial streets, such as raised intersections, street tree plantings, and sidewalks, to lower vehicular speeds and increase pedestrian safety.

Implementation Strategy 6.2: Public Transit (Obj. TR1.3, Obj. TR1.4)

Providing safe, comfortable and conveniently located bus shelters is a critical component in increasing public transit ridership. The Village should collaborate with TCAT to develop and implement a plan for placing additional bus shelters at key locations along all bus routes. In locations where bus shelters may not be warranted, safe waiting areas with distinctive signage should be constructed.

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The Village should also establish a formal channel for communication with the TCAT organization. Such arrangement would provide for consultation with Village officials and improved communication between TCAT and Village residents.

Implementation Strategy 6.3: Bicycle Transportation (Obj. TR 1.5)

Homes and businesses throughout the Village are located in relatively close proximity to the Community Corners area, Cornell University, and other activity nodes. Many Village residences are within ten minutes of these and other destinations, making bicycle use a viable alternative to the automobile.

To more effectively exploit the bicycle as a transportation alternative, the Village should develop a strategic plan for promoting bicycle use including the following elements:

1. Identify appropriate on-street and off-street routes for bicycles that would provide direct connections to major activity nodes such as Cornell University, the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community, Cayuga Heights Elementary School, and the Village of Lansing shopping district;
2. Incorporate whenever possible into the identification of bicycle routes American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials design standards governing gradients, sight distance, and curve alignment;
3. Develop a uniform system of signs to identify bicycle routes and alert drivers to increased bicycle presence on Village streets;
4. Develop design standards for site plan approval that include covered bicycle parking in convenient locations within developments;

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5. Ensure that the proposed Village bicycle route network is integrated into the regional network of bicycle routes.

Implementation Strategy 6.4: Pedestrian Infrastructure (Obj. TR1.6)

Creating a more pedestrian friendly environment is a key to reducing reliance on the automobile and creating a more sustainable Cayuga Heights. As a first step, the Village should develop and implement a strategic plan for sidewalks with the following components:

1. Identify and address gaps in the existing sidewalk network;
2. Develop a plan for a network of walkways that provide direct connections to major activity nodes such as Cornell University, the Kendal at Ithaca retirement community, Cayuga Heights Elementary School, Boynton Middle School, DeWitt Middle School, Ithaca High School, and the Village of Lansing shopping district;
3. Create specifications for Village walkways that address issues such as width, pavement design, accessibility for the physically impaired, buffering between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, stormwater management, summer shade, and maintenance.

Public Services and Utilities

Implementation Strategy 7.1: Utility Infrastructure (Obj. PS1.1)

The continued efficient and economical provision of high quality services provides the basis for and makes possible other Village enhancements. To ensure this, the Village should establish and update strategic plans for all utility systems, beginning with base plan mapping, capacity benchmarks, and planning for obsolescence replacement. This process should:

1. Identify opportunities to partner with adjacent municipalities and institutions for funding joint and mutually beneficial infrastructure projects;
2. Identify opportunities to partner with businesses and utilities to pursue sustainable practices. One such practice would be a program in collaboration with New York State Electric and Gas Corporation (NYSEG) to replace existing street lights with newer technology such as solar powered LED lighting. Such lighting technology would increase energy efficiency and reduce the impacts of street light glare and light trespass on adjoining properties and reduce light haze that washes out the night sky;
3. As part of an overall plan for a mixed-use district for the Community Corners area, plan for relocation and burial of overhead utility lines.

Implementation Strategy 7.2: Governmental Services (Obj. PS1.2, Obj. PS1.3, Obj. PS1.4)

As the Village of Cayuga Heights evolves in the coming years, it should consistently review its provision of services to Village residents and be vigilant in

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identifying opportunities to streamline and improve their delivery. Specific steps that the Village should take in the near future include:

1. Establishing formal communication links with Cornell University, the Town of Ithaca, the City of Ithaca, and the Village of Lansing to better coordinate municipal planning and development decisions;
2. Creating a working relationship with the Town of Ithaca's Planning Department to provide professional planning services to the Village on an as needed basis;
3. Establishing an ongoing dialogue with Ithaca City School District (ICSD) to assess the needs of Cayuga Heights Elementary School and provide safe access to the school.

Conclusion

The Village's Planning Board was charged by the Board of Trustees to produce a Comprehensive Plan that would provide a yardstick for the present Village and a vision for its future development. The primary challenge for the Planning Board in drafting this document was to identify and preserve those qualities of the Village most valued by its residents while simultaneously acknowledging and accommodating change. This challenge is not unique to Cayuga Heights and yet Cayuga Heights is in many ways a unique community. Most residents are extremely satisfied living here and would prefer by and large for things to remain as they are. However, changes are inevitable, some of which can be anticipated while others are unforeseen. Therefore, the Comprehensive Plan is intended to be a living document and not a final statement. It is expected that, as implementation steps begin and community needs evolve, the Plan will be amended through periodic review involving Village residents. If, as the Plan suggests, the Village is a special place, then resident participation in local government is key to ensuring it stays that way.